

This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>



## **Fictionalised history**

### **identity, nationalism and nation-building in late Ottoman and early Republican Turkish novels**

Agaoglu, Aslihan

*Awarding institution:*  
King's College London

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

#### **END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT**



**Unless another licence is stated on the immediately following page** this work is licensed

under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

licence. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

#### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [librarypure@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:librarypure@kcl.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Fictionalised History: Identity, Nationalism and Nation-building in Late  
Ottoman and Early Republican Turkish Novels**

**Aslihan Agaoglu Reekers**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, King's College London**

## **Abstract**

Nationalism in Turkey was an evolutionary process which took place during the final stages of the Ottoman Empire, the War of Independence and the Republican period. This transitional process was heavily influenced by the intellectuals and writers of the age, especially in the literature that they produced. Literature was a critical platform for nurturing and even propagating new ideologies such as nationalism, Westernization and even feminism. Literature was also the vehicle for transporting and transmitting such ideologies to the general public, as well as being an educational tool for warning people about the representation and misinterpretation of such ideological underpinnings of the new nation-state of Turkey. This dissertation examines some of the most critical literary novels from the period, written by some of the most influential intellectuals, such as Halide Edib Adivar, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu and Resat Nuri Guntekin, in order to understand the evolution of Turkish nationalism as well as the reconstruction of Turkish national and cultural identity.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	5
Copyright .....	6
Introduction .....	7
Literature Review .....	15
Chapter 1: Nationalism in Turkey: Historical Context & Theoretical Framework .....	32
Introduction .....	32
Nationalism and Turkish National Identity: A Theoretical Understanding .....	33
The Evolution of Turkish Nationalism through Literature .....	45
The Reconstruction of Turkish National Identity in Literature .....	52
The New Turkish Women .....	60
Conclusion .....	62
Chapter 2: Narrative, Turkish Literature and National Identity .....	65
Introduction .....	65
Narrative Analysis and Narrative Theory .....	66
Narrative, History and Literature .....	73
Narrative, Nation Building and Identity .....	87
Conclusion .....	100
Chapter 3: Literature of the New Republic .....	102
Introduction .....	102
The Unsurpassable War, the Revolution and the Aftermath .....	103
The Conflict of East and West in Context of Re-constructing the Turkish National Identity .....	120
The Irretrievable Generation Gap .....	133
Conclusion .....	150
Chapter 4: Forging New Social Roles .....	152

Introduction.....	152
Change of the Family Unit and First Signs of Feminism .....	153
The New Republic and Social Life .....	171
Traditionalism versus Modernism .....	184
Conclusion .....	200
Chapter 5: Literature and the New Turkish Women.....	202
Introduction.....	202
Westernization and its Perception: Perfection and the Degeneration of Female Identity in Turkish Literature.....	204
Aliye as a Role Model for the Turkish Women of the New Republic.....	221
Islam, Traditionalism and the New Turkish Woman.....	233
Sacrifice, Women and the Birth of a Nation.....	241
Conclusion .....	245
Dissertation Conclusion .....	248
Bibliography .....	252
Books .....	252
Articles.....	261
Other Sources.....	263

## **Acknowledgements**

I am ever so grateful and thankful to my parents, Beyza and Ahmet Agaoglu, for all the support they have given to, not only during my studies, but throughout my entire life. Thank you to my sister Ayse Agaoglu, who is my joy and source of inspiration, and to my husband, Martijn Reekers who was my rock during this time. My son, Nathan Ali, who has been a great source of motivation and gave me the strength to finish my work. To all my friends who endured my never-ending monologues on the wonders of literature, history and books and provided support and comfort, especially Sedef Kisakurek, Kristin Higgions, Elsa Tulin Sen and Didem Erdogan, thank you for helping me in more ways than you can ever imagine. Thank you to Halide Edib Adivar, whose life and work never fails to inspire me and pushes me to think in ways I have not done before. I also owe a great deal of gratitude to the TRS and IMES teams at King's College London.

**Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotations from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

## **Introduction**

In working towards examining nationalism, nationhood, social transformation and identity, it becomes clear that an extensive body of literature already exists within academia. These studies have been pursued through various angles, focusing on developing normative approaches towards the entities of state, nation and identity in order to understand their cultural, sociological, economical and political consequences. However, one approach that has been somewhat neglected, at least in Turkey's case, is the study of these entities through literary texts. This dissertation focuses on literature produced during the transitional period of Turkey over 1918 to mid 1930s, from the Islamic Empire towards the secular Republic, in order to understand how literature, specifically the novel, contributed towards the development of new ideologies, influenced social transformation and fostered the reconstruction of a new national and cultural identity.

In her memoir, Halide Edip states that, "Nationalism in Turkey has more than one phase and name as well as definition."<sup>1</sup> This makes studying the evolution of nationalism as well as national identity in Turkey both very interesting and challenging. The development of Turkish nationalism, which eventually led the country to fight for its own independence and to establish a secular Republic, went through many stages, met various obstacles and faced some difficult challenges along the way. It could be argued that, even today, nationalism is still evolving in Turkey, and there are multiple definitions of Turkish nationalism, each with its own narrative and interpretation of historical events. This dissertation aims to demonstrate that one of the most critical ways to study and understand how nationalism emerged and

---

<sup>1</sup> Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, USA 2005, p. 313



evolved in Turkey, from the Ottoman Empire to the new Republic of Turkey, is to study the literature from this time period.

Early work in narrative studies mainly focused on the structures of literary texts rather than the contexts in which stories were told. However, in more recent years it became apparent that the study of narrative could be fruitfully combined with the study of ideologies.<sup>2</sup> These ideologies, in specific contexts, are rather difficult to systematize or make explicit; however, if a narrative is convincing, the ideology it both conveys and helps reproduce has a substantial chance of being accepted by the reader.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Turkey, the ideologies such as nationalism, Westernization, secularism and even gender equality were nurtured by literature and presented to the public, usually in the form of novels published as serials in various newspapers and magazines. This encouraged the public to be familiarised with these ideologies, through characters and plot lines with which they could identify.

This examination of literature, however critical, is not straightforward. The work that authors produced during this transitional period could only be studied once this period itself was thoroughly examined, due to the unique case of Turkey's situation—that is, the Ottoman Empire was a multinational empire under the threat of separatist nationalism, and, at the same time, European imperialism. The development of Turkish nationalism was a response towards such threats. However, it could be argued that post-colonial theory would not be suitable to understanding this evolution, since

---

<sup>2</sup> Narrative theorists such as Roland Barthes were among the first to indicate this new way of studying literary texts.

<sup>3</sup>Herman, & Vervaeck, *Ideology: The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, UK 2012, p. 218

the Ottoman Empire was never actually colonized. While the Ottoman Empire did lose territories to colonialism, it never lost its sovereignty. This means postcolonial literature as a theory will also, to a large extent, be inapplicable in studying the literature that was produced during late-Ottoman period, or the early years of the Turkish Republic.

Literature produced during this transitional era had its own unique components. It could be argued that one of its most intriguing elements was the contradictions it embodied; the eagerness to Westernize and celebrate the new secular, modern nation collided with the fear of losing treasured values and traditions from the Ottoman past. This is one of the main reasons why literature is arguably one of the most vital ways to examine the period and understand how nationalism and identity evolved.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that literature was a critical platform, starting from the 1908 Tanzimat period all the way into the first years of the new Republic.

Literature was a way to nurture new ideologies such as nationalism, Turkism, pan-Ottomanism, secularism and even feminism. Intellectuals of this period were also the leaders of public opinion, which put them in a position to use their narrative as a bridge between these ideologies and the public.

In order to deconstruct the nation into its many collectives, one must address the individuals that make up those collectives. While there are a variety of approaches that one could take to address the individuals, this particular study is concerned mainly with fictional ones. Literature shapes one's perception on individuals as well as society, therefore studying social issues, or social transformation, through literary characters provides a critical understanding when it comes to national and individual

identity.<sup>4</sup> Ottoman and Turkish writers who wrote fiction often wrote about their own times, and their insights into the society around them are far richer than most historians and social scientists.<sup>5</sup> This makes it even more relevant to bridge historical studies together with literature to achieve a deeper understanding of the era.

Literature plays a vital role in people's lives; it provides information and insight to human thought and behavior which helps enhance our ability to empathize with those who are different from and alien to us<sup>6</sup>. In Turkey's case, what was alien were ideas rather than people. During the transitional period, along with Westernization, a great many new ideas and changes were introduced in an effort to reconstruct the national and cultural identity of the nation. These changes affected every aspect of life; from language to marriage to the way people dressed and socialized, nothing was left untouched. Literature, at this point, played a vital role: it not only introduced these new ideas to the public, it also served as a lighthouse, guiding people as to how these changes should be applied, warning of the dangers of misinterpreting these ideologies, and clarifying how to achieve a balance between Eastern traditions and Western modernism.

One of the most effective ways for literature to reach its audience were serial publications, mainly through newspapers and magazines. The print media boomed

---

<sup>4</sup> Prof. Kemal H. Karpat advocates this method, suggesting that studying social issues through fiction has provided him with necessary insight to understand individuals and social groups.

<sup>5</sup> Findley, Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity, USA 2010, p. 3

<sup>6</sup> Psychologists David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano, at the New School for Social Research in New York, have proved that reading literary fiction enhances the ability to detect and understand other people's emotions, a crucial skill in navigating complex social relationships.

after the oppressive regime of Sultan Abdulhamid II who imposed a grave censorship on print publishing. With the 1908 Young Turk revolution this censorship was lifted to a large extent, which helped print publishing to flourish and reach a wider population. This is observable from the number of publications before and after 1908. During Abdulhamid II's last reigning years the number of serial publications were around 120 in the Ottoman Empire; after the declaration of *Mesrutiyet*, however, this number escalated to 377 just for Istanbul, and 730 nationwide within a year.<sup>7</sup> Although this freedom of press was short-lived, this dynamic literary environment and these serial publications became the platform where people were informed about what was happening in the country as well as in the world. The authors who wrote for various magazines not only published articles and opinion pieces, but also short stories and novels as serials. As the public waited for the next episode of the story, a general awareness of the literature became another factor in reinforcing the imagined national community.<sup>8</sup>

The link between nationalism and literature is specifically highlighted by Benedict Anderson, who suggested that print capitalism played a major role in creating the nation. According to Anderson, the birth of this “imagined community” can best be seen through the novel and the newspaper because these forms provide the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation.<sup>9</sup> Anderson adds that the “seeds of Turkish nationalism are easily detachable in the

---

<sup>7</sup> Koroglu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı 1914-1918*, İstanbul 2010, p. 62

<sup>8</sup> C. V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*, USA 2010, pp. 2-3

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, New York 2006, pp. 24-25

appearance of a lively vernacular press in Istanbul in the 1870s.”<sup>10</sup> This close relationship between the emergence of nationalism, alongside other ideologies, and the emergence of a lively literary environment is vital to gaining a better understanding of how nationalism evolved in Turkey.

Historically, the novel accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the ‘one, yet many’ of national life, and by mimicking the structure of a nation.<sup>11</sup> The novel, along with the newspaper, allowed people to imagine the special community that was the nation and helped them feel they were a part of this community. In the case of Turkey, when the country was at the brink of collapse, it helped people to come together for a cause, to fight a war and found a new Republic. After this was accomplished, however, literature’s work did not come to an end. When the new secular Republic was established, literature became mainly concerned with the reconstruction of the Turkish national and cultural identity. The novel was an educational tool, through which writers provided the public with examples of good characters to follow in their footsteps and bad characters to avoid, as well as a medium to express concerns regarding the reforms and the aftermath of the revolution.

### **Structure and Content of the Dissertation**

The novel as a genre has been a very influential platform in Turkey’s history; therefore, this dissertation is mainly concerned with this particular form of literature. When examining novels from this transitional period, one can clearly see that the

---

<sup>10</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, New York 2006, p. 75

<sup>11</sup> Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, New York 1990, p. 49

majority of these novels are not primarily written for their literary merit, but they are mostly concerned with conveying a message, either to educate the public or warn them against the dangers of Westernization. In addition to this, it is also very noticeable that there are a few major themes that dominated the novels from this time, such as the themes of Westernization and the misinterpretation of Westernization; the reconstruction of the Turkish national and cultural identity; the changing family unit and social structure; and the woman's place in society.

The main objective of this dissertation is to examine some of the most influential and widely read novels of the transitional period by the most influential authors of this time. Halide Edib Adivar specifically was an influential author, educator and an activist of her time, and her books were widely read. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu and Resat Nuri Guntekin were also prolific, influential authors as well as educators. The novels that are examined in this dissertation, *Handan* (1912), *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore, 1926) and *Tatarcik* (1939) by Halide Edib Adivar, *Kiralik Konak* (A Mansion for Rent, 1922) by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu and *Yaprak Dokumu* (Fall of Leaves, 1930) by Resat Nuri Guntekin are all considered Turkish classics and can be found in the Turkish national curriculum for both primary school and high school.<sup>12</sup> These novels have left such a deep imprint on the Turkish psyche that it would be highly unusual to meet a literate Turk who has not heard of them. They have

---

<sup>12</sup> According to the MEB's list of classical books from all around the world for middle school children Adivar's *Sinekli Bakkal* (The Clown and His Daughter), Karaosmanoglu's *Kiralik Konak* and Guntekin's *Calikusu* (*The Wren*, 1922) are recommended novels. However, vast majority of literary scholars including Inci Enigun and Selim Ileri also classify Adivar's *Vurun Kahpeye*, *Atesten Gomlek* (A Shirt of Flame, 1922) and *Handan* as well as Guntekin's *Yaprak Dokumu* as classics as well. Many of these classical novels are still on rotation in many middle and high schools all across Turkey.

been adapted into plays, movies and TV shows; in recent years especially, a modern TV adaptation of *Yaprak Dökümü* made a splash both in Turkey and some eastern European countries.

Many scholars have addressed the issue of modernization and social transformation, such as Kamal H. Karpat, Erik Jan Zürcher, Halil İnalcık and Serif Mardin.

Accordingly, many scholars, such as İnci Enigün and Selim İleri, have conducted literary criticism on those classical novels mentioned above. However, there is a void in the existing literature, which might otherwise merge these two examinations and conduct a study where these issues are analysed through the literature from this period of transformation. Literature played a critical role during this time, and it influenced both the birth and the evolution of the new nation, therefore it would only make sense to analyse some of these novels in depth in order to understand how these novels had this effect and what their objective was. This dissertation's main aim is to address this void in the body of scholarly literature.

The main research questions addressed herein are: firstly, how did literature, mainly novels, affect the nation-building process and the reconstruction of Turkish national and cultural identity during the transitional era; secondly, what was literature's role during this transitional era in terms of education and propaganda; and thirdly, what was literature's main concern during this time of transition—in other words, what were some of the major themes in the literary scene that concerned the intellectuals of this era? From these three main questions the nature of identity, nationalism, nation-building and social transformation are examined.

## Literature Review

The role of literature in identity formation has been a source of interest in many academic works. In Turkey's case, however, there is a gap in the existing body of literature, where a systematic approach to themes such as nationalism, feminism, social change and cultural identity can be developed further. This thesis attempts to fill this void.

When examining Turkish literature, we witness two different approaches: a thematic one, and one that offers a more general overview of the literary body.

Inci Enigun has penned three extensive volumes on the Turkish literature of the transition period: *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati:*

*Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete 1839 – 1923* and *Yeni Turk Edebiyati Arastirmalari*.

Enigun discusses a vast amount of literary works including novels, poems, plays and even life-writing from the perspectives of nationalism, feminism and social transformation. Her volumes provide readers with a basic overview of the time and period under scrutiny. Enigun's main argument is that the literature produced after the establishment of the Turkish republic reflects the struggles and the evolution that the nation went through. The writers who supported the new government in Ankara, many of whom had personally fought in the Independence War, eventually penned their experiences, and Enigun suggests that this literature reflects the joys of both having a strong leader to follow and a revived Turkish nationalism.<sup>13</sup> However, Enigun does not rely on any theoretical framework to build her argument; her conclusions are based on the examination of the literature from the era in question.

---

<sup>13</sup> Enigun, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 13



Enigun admits that she has not examined the literature in a historical context, persuaded that others have already done it. In *Yeni Turk Edebiyati Arastirmalari*<sup>14</sup>, Enigun selects literary figures to examine their contributions to the development of Turkish literature during the late Ottoman and early Republican period. In this volume, she mainly writes about authors, such as Halide Edib Adivar, Ziya Gokalp, Omer Seyfettin and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu. While the first half of the book focuses more on the authors themselves and a selection of their novels, the second half is concerned with language and themes related to family, children's literature, and women's issues. This thesis aims to build on Enigun's analysis of the transitional period, while offering a more theoretical approach, based on nationalism and narrative.

*The Issue of East and West in Halide Edib Adivar's Literature*<sup>15</sup> is one of Enigun's notable works that focuses entirely on Halide Edib Adivar and the latter's perception of westernization. Accordingly, each and every novel and novella written by Adivar is explored through a conflict between East and West and its influence on the Turkish society, a theme which was of great concern to Adivar, herself, for many years. Indeed, this subject was of great concern to Halide Edib and a preoccupation, which the novelist examined deeply in many of her works.

However, it must be underscored that Enigun does not offer a same level of analysis for all of Adivar's works. She argues that Adivar advocated for a balanced take on Eastern and Western identities and portrayed women as her main characters seeking

---

<sup>14</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati Arastirmalari*, Istanbul 2017

<sup>15</sup> Enigun, *Halide Edip Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi*, Istanbul 2007

to achieve a level of Western modernization without necessarily compromising on Eastern values. While it must be conceded that Enigun succeeds to identify a key theme in Adivar's literature, examining this perspective without making desirable comparisons to the other novelists of the period, especially those of Adivar's male contemporaries such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu and Resat Nuri Guntekin, as this dissertation does, strips away one of the most striking aspects of Adivar's literature. Compared to her contemporaries, Adivar was a highly enthusiastic advocate that women could achieve a balance between Western modernization and Eastern values. Therefore, it is important that her work is considered alongside her contemporaries. Additionally, while Enigun produces an invaluable study by solely focusing on East and West, she discards many other equally important issues, addressed in Adivar's novels. This is an important omission on the part of Enigun.

It could be argued that numerous Turkish scholars followed in Enigun's footsteps and have taken a similar approach towards studying the Turkish literature from the transitional period. Abdulkadir Hayber's *Halide Edib, Yakup Kadri ve Nesat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismasi*<sup>16</sup>, Dr Hulusi Gecgel's *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*<sup>17</sup> (Turkish Literature of the Republican Era), and Ibrahim Kibris' book with the same title, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*<sup>18</sup>, all examine westernization, generational gaps, social decay and nationalism through literature. While Hayber specifically focuses on conflict of generations, caused by a rapid societal

---

<sup>16</sup> Hayber, Halide Edib, Yakup Kadri ve Nesat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismasi, Istanbul 1993

<sup>17</sup> Gecgel, Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati, Istanbul 2011

<sup>18</sup> Kibris, Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati, Istanbul 2011

modernization facilitated by the state; Gecgel's and Kibris' studies assess the Turkish literature, albeit usually overlooking its impact on nationalism and social change.

In his book, Hayber declares that he chose to study the works of Adivar, Karaosmanoglu and Guntekin specifically, as he declares that they were among the greatest authors of their time. While this thesis essentially agrees with this statement, it offers to freshly compare the aforementioned authors' novels with one another. On the other hand, Gecgel and Kibris conducts vast studies across multiple genres to demonstrate the evaluation of Turkish literature, while overlooking its impact on nationalism and social change.

There are numerous other studies conducted by acclaimed scholars, such as Fuad Koprulu and Talat S. Halman, that focus on giving a historical account of Turkish literature. Many academic accounts, including this dissertation, have relied on these scholars' work to get inspiration and move them further

Koprulu's *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*<sup>19</sup> (History of Turkish Literature) is a cornerstone, which from the pre-Islamic era and reaches to the thirteenth century literature of Anatolia. With each era studied, the author analyzes the political and social life of that specific time period in order to understand literature's influence. This thesis opts for a similar methodology to analyze literature's impact on society.

---

<sup>19</sup> Koprulu, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, Ankara 2011

As for Halman's study, entitled *Rapture and Revolution*<sup>20</sup>, it is a valuable work in poetry and prose poetry with a specific focus on Turkish folklore, myths and monoliths with the evolution of drama, theater and modern poetry until the 1950s. Aiming to set contemporary Turkish literature within its historical and cultural perspective, Halman argues that the evolution of Turkish culture is reflected in the literary output from its earliest periods of the Republican era. This thesis pursues the same idea, but rather focuses on novels.

Considering the literature mentioned so far, one can mostly identify an existing academic gap. Most studies, largely conducted by Turkish academics and in their own language, since most of the novels have not been translated, mainly deploy a more generic approach towards literature, meaning instead of conducting a deeper analysis of novels, they have chosen examined them in a more simplified way.

Kazim Yetis' two-volume study, entitled *Türk Edebiyatı*<sup>21</sup> (Turkish Literature), for instance, examines literary works from the Tanzimat period to the modernist period. Yetis argues that the most fruitful period of Turkish literature was the period of modernization and although the signs of this could be traced back to the 1850s, it was the Tanzimat period where the idea of modernization was visibly reflected in the literature. Such modernization and the influence of the West inevitably changed the Turkish identity, and with that, how people approached literature.

---

<sup>20</sup> Halman, *Rapture and Revolution*, New York 2007

<sup>21</sup> Yetis: *Türk Edebiyatı I & II*, Istanbul 2013

Noticeably, academic studies, such as Yetis' *Türk Edebiyatı*, look at vast periods, or vast collections from selected authors and tend to only hastily examine crucial themes such as nationalism, westernization, social decay, identity-formation and feminism. This thesis aims to fill this void, by limiting the number of authors and their novels it studies, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the aforementioned themes.

There are numerous critical studies conducted on the subject of women and how women have been portrayed in the Turkish literature. It is crucial to consider these within the framework of this dissertation, the main objective of which is to analyse the approach in literature towards women. Written between 1946 and 1960 by Ramazan Gulemdan, *Türk Romanında Kadın Kimliği*<sup>22</sup> (Identity of Woman in the Turkish Novel) is an academic study concerned with the issue of women's representation in Turkish literature with a specific focus on the novel as a genre. Gulendam looks at how women were represented in novels in family life and marriage, social and political life, workforce and education. The author's main argument is that literary texts have been used as a vehicle to introduce and familiarize with a new cultural, national and social identity.

In addition to Gulendam's work, Bahriye Ceri's book *Türk Romanında Kadın: 1923 – 38 Donemi*<sup>23</sup> (Women in the Turkish Novel: 1923 – 38 Period) analyzes some of the cornerstone novels of Turkish literature (by Adivar, Karaosmanoglu and Guntekin) in order to understand female characters depicted in them; for instance, "Aliye" from *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore). Ceri's literary argument revolves around the

---

<sup>22</sup> Gulendam, *Türk Romanında Kadın Kimliği*, Konya 2006

<sup>23</sup> Ceri, *Türk Romanında Kadın*, İstanbul 1996

period between 1923 and 1938, which hosted the most dramatic sociological transformation under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's reforms.

Despite their dissimilarities, both Gulendam and Ceri highlight the significance of social transformation through women characters in that period's novels through multiple dimensions such as marriage, family life, and social space. What both studies lack, however, is comparing female characters against the male ones in order to get a more complete picture of social transformations. This thesis examines male characters, along with their approach to female characters, to get a better understanding of how social reforms affected each gender with their similarities and differences.

Other research on feminism and literature, conducted by Jale Parla and Sibel Irzik, with the title *Kadin Dile Dusunce*<sup>24</sup> (When Woman are Talked About) examines women's identity and sexuality in literature. Based mainly on contemporary female writers such as Latife Tekin, and comprising only a sub-section about Halide Edib Adivar and the subject of sexuality in the latter's early novels, it focuses on both Turkish and Western literatures, as well as Republican and contemporary writings by women. Parla and Irzik argue that when women are talked about, the narrative is usually different from when men are the subject of conversations: it is harsher and less likely to be merciful. According to the authors, such a social phenomenon can be examined through literature, and so they put women's writings under the microscope to see how literature and gender roles in society impact each other.

---

<sup>24</sup> Irzik & Parla, *Kadin Dile Dusunce*, Istanbul 2011

Another area that needs to be surveyed is the large amount of academic studies that have been conducted on Halide Edib Adivar and her various works. For example, Ayse Durakbas' book, *Halide Edib: Turk Modernlesmesi ve Feminism*<sup>25</sup> (Halide Edib: Turkish Modernism and Feminism) focuses on feminism in Turkey and how it evolved with modernism through Adivar's life and work, something which she argues helped shape Turkish feminism. The first section is a thorough investigation of feminism, where the author traces its evolution in Turkey alongside nationalism and modernism during the Young Ottoman, the Young Turk and the Kemalist periods. Durakbas casts Adivar as the constructor of the modern female identity in Turkey, and therefore, devotes the second half of her study to the examination of Adivar's influence on feminism, namely through the latter's own memoirs. Not only had Adivar been a fundamental impact on the founding and nurturing of feminism in Turkey, her literature, as well as her life, set a role model for the modern Turkish woman. This dissertation, in its essence, follows the same premise and reaches to the same conclusion as Durakbas, however, while Durakbas primarily focuses on Adivar's life and memoirs to build and prove its argument, this thesis mainly focuses focus on her novels. These were highly influential not only at the time of their publications, but also for decades to follow, impacting women's identity in Turkey immensely. Last but not least, as narrative theory suggests, characters in fictional worlds are highly relatable, more so than their authors in most cases, which is why this thesis aims to show that it was Adivar's novels, more so than her memoirs, that helped build and nurture feminism in Turkey.

---

<sup>25</sup> Durakbas, Halide Edib: Turk Modernlesmesi ve Feminism, Istanbul 2012

Kelime Erdal's study, *Halide Edib Adivar ve Egitim*<sup>26</sup> (Halide Edib Adivar and Education), albeit extensively, focuses rather solely on Adivar's impact on Turkish educational system. It begins with an analysis on Adivar's own education, then moves on to examining education through different categories such as family, school and religious education along with the role of educators in each case. Erdal argues that even though Adivar did not receive an official training to become an educator, she still played a crucial role in the development of education in Turkey as an examiner and teacher, opened schools and became the first female professor in the country.

Adivar's own perspective on education and her impact on women's role in education in Turkey are also subjects that this thesis analyses in later chapters. As a key element in Adivar's life and education, therefore played a big role in her novels, too. Her main female characters usually are educators, cast as vessels to convey Adivar's own messages to the students, as well as the readers. While it is absolutely critical to examine the theme of education in her novels, this thesis aims to do so in juxtaposition to other critical themes in Adivar's novels, such as nationalism and feminism in order to offer a more rounded understanding of Adivar's ideology.

Apart from Halide Edib Adivar, one of the most studied authors in Turkish literature appears to be Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu. A mention-worthy academic study on Karaosmanoglu is written by Niyazi Aki, entitled *Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu: Insan – Eser – Fikir – Uslup*<sup>27</sup> (Takup Kadri Karaosmanoglu: Human – Work – Idea – Style). Aki's study examines Karaosmanoglu's life and his complete works, which

---

<sup>26</sup> Erdal, Halide Edib Adivar ve Egitim, Bursa 2008

<sup>27</sup> Aki, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu, Istanbul 2001



include poems, short stories, and novels. He also looks at Karaosmanoglu's style as an author as well as his perspectives on nationalism, feminism, the conflict of East and West in Turkey and cultural identity. Aki argues that when Karaosmanoglu began his writing career in 1909, the country had already begun its transformation and the novel was the genre that flourished the most during that time. In return, the novel had an immense impact on identity and social change.

Like Aki's, Mehmet Emin Uludag's *Uc Devrin Yol Ayriminda*<sup>28</sup> (At the Crossroads of Three Eras) is also another extensive study of Karaosmanoglu, in which Uludag examines poetry and poets, novels and novelists, including a long list of Turkish and western authors such as Halide Edib Adivar and Resat Nuri Guntekin.

The conclusion that the novel had a great impact on social change has been made by many academics who studied the literature of the transitional period without a specific theoretical framework like that of Inci Enigun, Aki and Uludag. This thesis aims to look at Karaosmanoglu's specific novels not only in line with the period in which he lived but through the lenses of narrative and nationalist theories.

Otherwise, critical studies exist focusing on ideologies rather than on literature through specific authors and their works. One of the most significant of such studies is Erol Koroglu's *Turk Edebiyati ve Birinci Dunya Savasi*<sup>29</sup> (Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity), which focuses on the period between World War I and the establishment of the new Republic in 1923. In this extensive volume, Koroglu studies

---

<sup>28</sup> Uludag, *Uc Devrin Yolayriminda*, Ankara 2005

<sup>29</sup> Koroglu, *Turk Edebiyati ve Birinci Dunya Savasi*, Istanbul 2010

the literature produced by Turkish intellectuals during World War I to propagate different ideologies such as pan-Turanism, pan-Islamism, pan-Ottomanism and pan-Turkism. Koroglu argues that literature was used as a platform for propaganda to nurture these ideologies and present them to the public. Accordingly, literature played a critical role during World War I and subsequently, the Turkish Independence War in reshaping public opinion; and intellectuals of this period were accepted as the leaders of public opinion.

Similar to Koroglu's, A. P. Foulkes' study, *Literature and Propaganda*<sup>30</sup>, also tries to identify how literature can be utilized as a platform for propaganda in a more theoretical sense: "The study of literary texts, which throughout the centuries have served the purpose of both propaganda and demystification, provide us with the possibility of investigation various aspects of this process."<sup>31</sup> In line with these authors' ideas, my dissertation also dissects several key novels to demonstrate precisely how literature was used as a platform to bring about social change in Turkey.

Moving on from propaganda, there are at least two more significant studies concerning literature and society, both of which aim to examine the impact of literature on society and politics in Turkey. The first one is by Mehmet Samsakci, entitled *Siyaset ve Roman*<sup>32</sup> (Politics and the Novel), which inspects the multi-party period and how it is reflected in the Turkish novel. Focusing on the literature

---

<sup>30</sup> Foulkes, *Literature and Propaganda*, New Yourk 1983

<sup>31</sup> Foulkes, *Literature and Propaganda*, New Yourk 1983, p.107

<sup>32</sup> Samsakci, *Siyaset ve Roman*, Istanbul 2014

produced from 1930 to the 1950s, when basically the first attempts to switch to a multi-party system took place, Samsakci states that, “One of the most important reasons for the birth of the Turkish novel is social transformation.”<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, the Tanzimat period, the Independence War and the birth of the new republic are major raptures reflected in the literature. Besides, Samkasci argues that a passage towards the multi-party system had offered authors rich material that ended up shaping the literary output.

The second one is by Kemal H. Karpat, entitled *Osmanli'dan Gunumuze Edebiyat ve Toplum*<sup>34</sup> (Literature and Society: from the Ottoman Empire to Current Day), in which Karpat explores the evolution of the Turkish novel, contemporary Turkish literature, social space and literature. His insight is invaluable in understanding how literature influences society: ideas are nurtured and familiarized through literature and in turn, literature plays a critical role in reconstructing the cultural and national identity.

Samsakci and Karpat appears to have different perspectives on literature and society: Samsakci believes that social and political shifts reflect and shape literature, while Karpat insists on literature's role in shaping the Turkish identity. This thesis aims to examine both angles simultaneously, as literature is both the influencer, used as a propaganda tool for social change, however, at the same it is also influenced from this change.

---

<sup>33</sup> Samsakci, *Siyaset ve Roman*, Istanbul 2014, p.IX

<sup>34</sup> Karpat, *Osmanli'dan Gunumuze Toplum ve Edebiyat*, Istanbul 2011

Another angle worthy of consideration is literature's interaction with history. Zeynep Unsal's book *Edebiyatın Omuzundaki Melek: Edebiyatın Tarihle İlişkisi Üzerine Yazılar*<sup>35</sup> (The Angel on Literature's Shoulder: Articles on Literature's Relationship with History) explores history and literature in the case of Turkey. For Unsal, history is based on narrative and nationalism, national identity and westernization should be examined through this perspective.

On the other hand, the acclaimed Jale Parla's *Türk Romanında Yazar ve Baskalasım*<sup>36</sup> (Author and Alienation in the Turkish Novel) focuses on alienation and sees the generic author as a lonely figure in society. Based on different literary authors and their works from the perspective of alienation, Parla argues that there is an anti-hero type character that was born as a reaction to the perfect hero type of the pre 19<sup>th</sup> century Turkish novel. This work is significant to this dissertation, as most heroes and heroines appear to be alienated characters with a clear connection to the social transformations. While Parla's argument has its merits, I aim to prove that the alienated character's rise is not merely due to a reaction to the 19<sup>th</sup> century perfect hero type, but also happens as a result of the character's reaction to social change.

Furthermore, the collected essays edited by Walter Andres, *Intersections in Turkish Literature*<sup>37</sup> bring several scholars together to pursue the evolution of Turkish literature. Andres specifically looks at Turkish folk and American pop cultures as well as what they might have in common. This is an intriguing task, which suggests that

---

<sup>35</sup> Unsal, *Edebiyatın Omuzundaki Melek*, İstanbul 2011

<sup>36</sup> Parla, *Türk Romanında Yazar ve Baskalasım*, İstanbul 2015

<sup>37</sup> Andrews, *Intersections in Turkish Literature*, USA 2011

narrative theory is applicable to a large scale of literature allowing to compare both cultures.

Ahmet Ö. Evin's book, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Literature*,<sup>38</sup> on the other hand, is more concerned with the development of the novel as a genre through different stages of Turkish history. Starting from the traditional Turkish narrative in Central Asia, including the writings during the Islamic pre-Ottoman period, as well as classical Ottoman prose and poetry, Evin then moves on to the birth of the Turkish novel with Western influence, going as far as 1889. Agreeing with Evin that his study provides "a critical introduction to the development of the Turkish novel, seen in its social, cultural and ideological context",<sup>39</sup> my dissertation also builds on the idea that the Turkish novel grew as a genre over the centuries. This is an essential point in the understanding of the Turkish novel of the transitional period.

Let us remember that my dissertation covers themes such as nationalism, nation-building, national and cultural identity. It is, therefore, imperative to review some of the key academic outputs surrounding these. Carter Vaughn Findley's *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*<sup>40</sup> is a critical exploration of the Tanzimat period and the evolution of nationalism, westernization and modernism until the 2000s. Findley's methodology consists of using both historical facts and literature of the period under his scrutiny. Although literature remains a source for Findley to support his arguments, it is important to point out that it is not the main objective of his overall

---

<sup>38</sup> Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Literature*, USA 1983

<sup>39</sup> Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Literature*, USA 1983, p.7

<sup>40</sup> Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*, USA 2010

study. The literary examples he provides underscore the importance of literature when studying nationalism and modernism in Turkey.

Comparably, Sibel Bozdag's and Resat Kasaba's book, entitled *Rethinking Modernity and Nationalism in Turkey*<sup>41</sup> explores similar themes, such as Kemalist ideology, modernism in the 1990s, Islamist policy and gender. The authors argue that, while modernization was driven by the Kemalist elites, and took its inspiration exclusively from the West, Turkish society experienced dilemmas and a certain degree of confusion in the transformation and reconstruction of a national identity. This is a widely subscribed thesis, however, this dissertation aims to prove that it was the elites, who carried the Kemalist ideology forward, while showcasing the difficulties and demonstrating them in their literature. As Eric Jan Zürcher states in his comprehensive study, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi* (Turkey: A Modern History), many of the intellectuals of the time were in favor of adapting what they viewed as beneficial aspects of the West, such as science and technology, focusing on finding ways to merge the Western ways with the cultural identity of a predominantly Muslim country.<sup>42</sup>

In his book, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, Feroz Ahmad addresses this issue by the existence, henceforth, of two cultures: "(...) the westernized, secular culture of a tiny but influential minority associated with the bureaucracy, and the indigenous culture of the mass of the people associated with Islam."<sup>43</sup> Faroz argues that education being

---

<sup>41</sup> Bozdag & Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and Nationalism in Turkey*, USA 1997

<sup>42</sup> Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, Istanbul 2010

<sup>43</sup> Ahmad, *The Making of the Modern Turkey*, USA 2000, p. 92

one of the main concerns of Kemalists, the revolution could not be successful without it. The dilemma arising from this struggle can be understood through the literary productions in the early years of Kemalism, with the authors being also the instigators of such societal transformation.

Continuing with the issue of modernization in Turkey, Suna Kili's book, *The Ataturk Revolution: A Paradigm of Modernization*<sup>44</sup> examines Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's reforms and revolutions from the time of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire until the emergence of, what she terms as, *Ataturkism* as an ideology. Kili profoundly looks at how the systematic reforms eventually transformed the Turkish society through modernization as well as the struggles it brought about. She argues that only a few countries in the world have undergone a transformation of their cultural and political life as thoroughly and rapidly as Turkey and have emerged from it with a strict sense of nationhood. This dissertation agrees with Kili's thesis, in that the Ataturk revolution was immense, rapid and transformative. However, what this dissertation truly aims is to observe the literature's contribution to this process and how the struggles are literarily depicted.

Finally, it would be judicious to review some of the historical accounts of the period in question that this dissertation, in a sense, merrily built upon. The history of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey has been studied extensively, and one of the most significant studies on the subject is possibly Bernard Lewis' *Modern Turkiye'nin Dogusu*<sup>45</sup> (The Emergence of Modern Turkey). Lewis' chronology traces

---

<sup>44</sup> Kili, *The Ataturk Revolution*, Istanbul 2003

<sup>45</sup> Lewis, *Modern Turkiye'nin Dogusu*, Ankara 2010

the birth of the new nation back in the mid 1600s when the Ottoman empire started to decline. It then moves on to Ataturk's revolutions and the state of the new republic in the aftermath of Ataturk's death until the 1950s. Lewis' analysis is enriched with a focus on religion and culture among the Turkish society

*History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*<sup>46</sup> by Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw is another critical study, and their second volume focuses on the rise of modern Turkey between 1808 and 1975. Authors look at the Tanzimat reforms, the Young Turk period, the Turkish War of independence, and finally the Turkish Republic between 1923 and 1975.

Additionally, Halil Inalcik's book, *Osmanli ve Modern Turkiye*<sup>47</sup> (Ottomans and the Modern Turkey) needs to be mentioned as an important part of the literature. Inalcik examines the history of the country in two sections. The first is an analysis of the Ottoman social and political structures whereas the second focuses Ataturk and Kemalism; Turkey's relationship with the Western world; Ziya Gokalp and his influence on Turkish national and cultural identity.

I choose to approach the fields of nationalism, modernity and feminism through an unconventional perspective – that of literature – as I believe it played a vital role in the social transformation of Turkey. To prove this point, highly influential novels of their times are analyzed in due course with the perspectives of characterization, plot, voice and symbolism.

---

<sup>46</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, UK 2002

<sup>47</sup> Inalcik, *Osmanli ve Modern Turkiye*, Istanbul 2013



## **Chapter 1: Nationalism in Turkey: Historical Context & Theoretical Framework**

### **Introduction**

Nationalism in Turkey evolved in stages while the country fought for its survival and independence. The emergence of Turkish nationalism can be traced back to the Young Ottomans, a group of Turkish intellectuals who attained prominence during the late Tanzimat years, between 1867 and 1878<sup>48</sup>. However, the movement gained momentum in 1908 with the Young Turk Revolution. Consequently, reforms to westernize the country flourished throughout this period. While the effort to continue perusing this agenda was interrupted with the Balkan Wars (1912 – 1913), World War I (1914 – 1918), and the Turkish War of Independence (1919 – 1923), a national identity continued to evolve and became the new Turkish national identity during the Republican period.

The voyage from an Islamic Empire towards a secular republic was lengthy as well as thorny. It can be argued that one of the reasons for the inescapable collapse of the Ottoman Empire was fuelled by the emergence of modern nationalism. In fact, when the idea of nationalism spread, a multi-national Empire was heavily impacted by secessionist movements.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the principal state builder and the founder of the Republic of Turkey, along with other intellectuals and writers of the era, constructed a national narrative that eventually gave birth to a new nation and a new national and cultural identity for the Turkish people. Once the new republic was established, Atatürk did not waste any time putting a strict program of reforms in motion in order to build a

---

<sup>48</sup> Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, USA 2000, p. 3

Westernized national identity. This resulted, to a large extent, in many traditions that were associated with religion being removed from the public sphere.

The primary aim of this chapter is to theoretically analyse the process of such a nation-building process through the implementation of social reforms and the reconstruction of a new national identity. This step is essential to the core of this thesis, which is the analysis of transformation of Turkish society through literature and novels, where reforms have been depicted a major theme.

### **Nationalism and Turkish National Identity: A Theoretical Understanding**

The reconstruction of Turkish national identity was a lengthy, complex period with many struggles, actors and conflicts. It can be argued that it began with the emergence of the Young Ottomans, a group of intellectuals of the late Tanzimat period who utilized the press to create public opinion in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>49</sup> They succeeded to influence a new generation of intellectuals in the following decades, namely the Young Turks, who nurtured the idea of nationalism, which then became the foundation of the Turkish national identity.<sup>50</sup>

Identity is a complex and multi-layered relationship between an individual and a group, with which the individual relates.<sup>51</sup> National identity, as opposed to the other

---

<sup>49</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *The Rise of Modern Turkey*, UK 2002, p. 130

<sup>50</sup> Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi*, Istanbul 2015, p. 96

<sup>51</sup> Lowrance, *Identity, Grievances, and Political Action* 2006, p.168

kind of collective identities, is exceptionally functional for modernity since it is well equipped to meet the needs of a broader variety of social groups<sup>52</sup>.

Antony Smith remarks that nationalism is functional in industrial societies, where a vast majority of active and literate members are needed. The myths, memories, symbols and ceremonies associated with the nation, adds Smith, further provide these members with a sense of social cohesion and political action: ‘nationalism as an ideology of historic territory, (...) concentrates the energies of individuals and groups within a clearly demarcated ‘homeland’, in which all citizens are deemed to be brothers and sisters and to which they ‘belong’’,<sup>53</sup>

Hans Kohn argues that there are two forms of nationalism: political, which is ‘rational’; and cultural, which is ‘mystical’. The dominance of one over the other is related to the level of socio-political development of a community.<sup>54</sup> As for John Breuilly, he, states that the identity of a nation is rather maintained in “arbitrary” ways. The leap from culture to politics is made by portraying the nation at one moment as a cultural community, and at another, as a political community, whilst insisting that in an ideal state the national community will not be “split” into cultural, economic and political spheres.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in the Global Era*, Cambridge 2007, p. 155

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Kohn, *Nationalisms*, UK 1994, p.127

<sup>55</sup> Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, UK 1993, p. 69

Political nationalism first appeared in the West, when the middle-class gradually developed from the Renaissance onward, and formed the effective boundaries of the nation state. When such a nationalism emerged, the only thing that was needed was the transformation of the existing state into a people's state. Therefore, nationalism took practical and constitutional forms.<sup>56</sup> When nationalism emerged later in the East (by which Kohn means Central and Eastern Europe and Asia), it was an "imitative" response to the rationalist culture of the 'West'.<sup>57</sup> In the East, middle-classes did not exist like they did in the West. Society was mainly agrarian with large peasant communities, usually dominated by a reactionary aristocracy and with little correspondence between ethnic and political boundaries. Unable to identify with a concrete territorial community, and aware of the social and political "backwardness" of their culture compared with the 'West', nationalists, in this part of the world, created a visionary nation based on ancient historical memories and unique cultural attributes. This was followed by 'the superior mystical organic bond between peasant, land and community' against the rationalist citizenship ideals of the 'West'.<sup>58</sup>

Kohn's ideas can be related to Turkey as it represents a middle ground between eastern and western nationalism. In the experience of Turkish modernity, "nationalization" occupies a prominent role. This, by the way, can be the reason why the Turkish transition to modernity has often been seen merely as a transition from an Islamic Empire to the Turkish nation-state. On this ground, the Turkish experience is called unique because of its perceived incompatibility of Islam with the idea of

---

<sup>56</sup> Hutchinson & Smith, *Nationalisms*, UK 1994, pp. 127

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

“nation”.<sup>59</sup> Besides, the ‘superior mystical organic bond between peasant, land and community’ is also a dominant theme in the rhetoric of Turkish nationalism. For example, after Atatürk won the War of Independence from Anatolia, he re-located the capital from Istanbul to Ankara. In other words, the capital moved from the gateway to the West to the heartland of rural Anatolia with a romantic notion that it was the Turkish peasants who defended their lands against the occupying powers.

Ernest Gellner argues that “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”<sup>60</sup> He sees the nation as a purely modern phenomenon detached from the past. Gellner’s notion of ‘detachment from the past’ can easily be observed in the case of Turkish national consciousness. The founders of the new regime after 1923 decided that in order to build a new identity for a new nation, they first had to erase the Ottoman legacy. Therefore, the new regime established itself as a homogenous and secular nation-state that rejected the multicultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire and its emphasis on Islam.<sup>61</sup>

Kohn points out that each new nationalism, having received its original impulse from the cultural contact with other nations, looked for its justification and its differentiation vis à vis the heritage of its own past, and extolled the primitive and ancient depth and peculiarities of its traditions in contrast to Western rationalism and universal standards.<sup>62</sup> In Turkey’s case, Westernization—the idea, or perception, that

---

<sup>59</sup> Kaya, *Social Theory and Later Modernities: The Turkish Experience*, UK 2004, p. 48

<sup>60</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford 1983, p. 168

<sup>61</sup> Ozyurek, *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey*, NY 2007, p. 4

<sup>62</sup> Hutchinson & Smith, *Nationalisms*, UK 1994, p. 164

the West, having achieved a certain level of ‘civilization’ while other countries have not and, thus, should emulate the West to achieve ‘civilization,’—came about through a series of radical reforms in the realms of language, civil law, clothing, calendar and education, in a considerably short period of time.<sup>63</sup>

However, as mentioned earlier, the foundations for this transition date back to 1865 when the Young Ottomans inspired the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. In fact, the history of modernization in the Ottoman Empire—that is adopting Western-origin rational government institutions, as well as attitudes towards Western military, economy and ideological structure—was considered to have begun as early as the nineteenth century, aroused out of a historical necessity in order to meet the demands of the time and be able to compete with the progressive Western nations.<sup>64</sup>

Intriguingly, the Ottoman Empire had consisted of many different religions, races, languages and, eventually, nationalities, all of which influenced these groups to want to break free from the Empire.<sup>65</sup> But at the same time, nationalism was also the ideology that people hoped to keep the Empire together.<sup>66</sup> This might suggest that there were different strains of nationalism operating in the Empire at different times.

---

<sup>63</sup> Sezer, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme* Istanbul 2012, p. 14

<sup>64</sup> Azarian, “Nationalism in Turkey: Response to a Historical Necessity”, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 1, No. 12, September 2011, p. 72.

<sup>65</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, UK 2010, pp. 54-55.

<sup>66</sup> This appeared in several forms of nationalism: On the one hand Turkish nationalism was supported, however, some intellectuals also supported pan-Ottomanism and Turanism in order to keep the sense of unity in the Empire.

Smith suggests that there are three different levels of nationalism. First, there is the political level where nationalism as an ideology is a doctrine of the units of political power and a set of prescriptions about the nature of power holders.<sup>67</sup> Second, nationalism exists on an economic level where it prescribes a self-sufficiency of resources and purity of lifestyle in line with its commitment to autonomy and authenticity. Third, there is a social level, in which nationalism operates by prescribing the mobilization of the ‘people’, their legal equality as citizens and their participation in public life for the ‘national good’.<sup>68</sup>

That being said, Smith sees the broadest level of nationalism as a form of historicist culture and civic education that overlays or replaces the older models of religious culture and familial education.<sup>69</sup> In other words, nationalism is more than a style and doctrine of politics; it is a form of culture that has achieved global influence, and the nation is a type of identity whose meaning and priority are presupposed by this form of culture. Therefore, art, according to Smith, has a crucial role in the creation of identity because through their artistic expressions, nationalist artists may, directly or evocatively, ‘reconstruct’ the sights, sounds and images of the nation in all its concrete specificity. It is the artists and the intellectuals—poets, musicians, painters, novelists, historians, playwrights, archaeologists, philologists, anthropologists, folklorists—who can bring the national idea to life and disseminate it among the

---

<sup>67</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, USA 1991, pp. 91-93.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

people, using the language of the nation and, through their musings and research, give voice to the wider aspirations that they convey in images, myths and symbols.<sup>70</sup>

Another reason for Smith that attracts intellectuals towards nationalism is an ‘identity crisis’, meaning that intellectuals ultimately spring from the challenges posed to traditional religion and society by the ‘scientific (revolutionary) state’ wherever its influence is felt.<sup>71</sup> In Turkey’s case, this ‘identity crisis,’ has been combined with the actual crisis of a collapsing Empire, during and after which the intellectuals were challenged to construct a national identity that would ultimately save the country from destruction.

Conversely, Benedict Anderson suggests that modern nations are ‘imagined communities’. These nations consider themselves as part of a community of people who have by and large never met but who still share much in common. Anderson argues that this consciousness, equated with nationalism, is a powerful force that people would be willing to die for, and that this ‘imagining’ of a community is part of the on-going secularization of the Western world.<sup>72</sup>

Anderson further suggests that historically the very possibility to imagine a nation arose when three fundamental cultural conceptions lost their influence:

‘The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Smith, National Identity, USA 1991, p. 96

<sup>72</sup> Anderson, Imagined Communities, UK 2006, p.67



inseparable part of that truth. [...] Second was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centers-monarch who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological dispersion. [...] Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical.’<sup>73</sup>

I argue that Anderson’s theory is rightly applicable to the Turkish case. The sultans of the Empire, also the caliphs of the Muslim world, were perceived as divine entities and the people they ruled were their subjects.<sup>74</sup> In this regard, the abolition of the sultanate and the caliphate was a must for Ataturk for the new nation to be sovereign. The language had to change as well, from an Arabic script of multiple dialects to a Turkish language written with the Latin alphabet. The later presentation of the history of Turks separately from the history of Islam was related to these facts.<sup>75</sup> It must be said that all of these transformations occurred with the help of intellectuals such as Ziya Gokalp, Omer Seyfettin and Halide Edib Adivar, who almost “re-edited” the history for the new nation. The printing press played an undeniably large part in this process, hence Anderson’s argument that the seeds of Turkish nationalism can be detectable in the appearance of a lively vernacular press in Istanbul in the 1870s.<sup>76</sup> The emergence of a vernacular press meant rejection of the Ottoman language, a

---

<sup>73</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 36

<sup>74</sup> A great account of social structure in the Ottoman Empire has been written by Halil Inalcik in his book titled *Osmanli ve Modern Turkiye*, Timas Yayinlari, Istanbul 2013, pp. 42-46

<sup>75</sup> Dai, “Transformation of Islamic political identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization”, *Turkish Studies*, Volume 6 2005, Issue 1, pp. 23-24

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 74

language combining elements of Turkish, Persian and Arabic. Interestingly, the founder of the first newspaper, Ibrahim Sinasi, pursued a five-year study in France and was soon followed by others like him. By 1876, there were seven Turkish-language dailies in Istanbul.<sup>77</sup>

Anderson offers two main explanations for the evolution of national consciousness: first, the development of “print capitalism”, meaning the industrialization of printing to enable the sale of printed goods, such as books and newspapers, on a mass scale; second, the changing cultural representations of time.<sup>78</sup> Anderson argues that the growth of the press was especially vital to the capacity of the educated elites to begin imagining a community as the foundation of the nation. He also links the emergence of the novel as a genre with the stirring of national consciousness.<sup>79</sup> Inci Enigun rightly applies Anderson’s notion to the literature of the early Republican era, which was ‘systematically created to support the Turkish revolution.’<sup>80</sup>

It would be short-sighted, according to Anderson, to think of the imagined communities of nations as simply growing out of and replacing religious communities and dynastic realms:

‘Beneath the decline of sacred communities, languages and lineages, a fundamental change was taking place in modes of apprehending the

---

<sup>77</sup> Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism*, USA 1976, p. 107

<sup>78</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 67

<sup>79</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 25

<sup>80</sup> Enigun, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 12

world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to ‘think’ the nation.’<sup>81</sup>

Therefore, by extension, it would be insufficient to assume that Turkish nationalism arose simply because the country outgrew its religious identity. In Turkey’s case, as previously mentioned, the effects of print-capitalism were immense since 1835. In response to the increased literacy created by the secular schools, innumerable public and private Ottoman presses and publishing houses were established in Istanbul and the other major cities, producing almost three thousand books during the next half century.<sup>82</sup> Equally importantly as the books themselves were the newspapers and other periodicals produced in increasing numbers by the new press. The major official paper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, was published in 1840 by the first private Ottoman paper and lasted until 1860.<sup>83</sup>

Ayşe Kadioglu remarks that, it is important to emphasize the contradiction embedded between “eastern and western nationalisms” and how this reflected in the literature.<sup>84</sup> Such a distinction is already made by Kohn, between the Western and non-Western nationalisms that are referred to as, respectively, good and evil nationalisms. Accordingly, while the former is taken as the normal type, the latter becomes the

---

<sup>81</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 22

<sup>82</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume II*, UK2002, pp. 128-131

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Kadioglu, “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and Construction of Official Identity”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1996, p. 178

deviant type of nationalism.<sup>85</sup> With the initiation of Tanzimat reforms, the dilemma of achieving a balance between the materiality of the West and the spirituality of the East became quite acute. The main problem for the Tanzimat writers involved achieving a balance between these reforms and Islamic traditions. The Young Ottomans—a new literary movement that was inspired by French writers, such as Flaubert and Dumas—became crucial in getting the society to come to terms with the continuing modernization by focusing on such a balance. The extent of modernization and its compatibility with Islam, for instance, was a major substance of the writings of Namik Kemal (1840-1888), an influential activist and writer who was also a member of the Young Ottomans.<sup>86</sup>

Ziya Gokalp (1876 – 1924) was a key intellectual, inspired by the ideas and writings of Namik Kemal, who envisaged a middle road in this tradition. Gokalp did not think that the individual and his reason could be a criterion for social reconstruction; he rather claimed a shift from Tanzimat rationalism, which was inspired by the eighteenth century thinkers of the European Enlightenment and the nineteenth century Romantic thought, by accepting that the transcended reality of society identified with the nation instead of with individual reason.<sup>87</sup>

According to Kadioglu, despite the fact that Turkey was not a colony, similar conflicts and insolubility resulted from Turkey's aim to adopt the Westernization project while at the same time clinging to distinctive cultural traits. "The paradox of

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Gokalp. *Hirs ve Medeniyet*, Istanbul 2013, pp. 68-69

Turkish nationalism which resulted in both a hostility towards and an imitation of Western ways has accompanied the modernization process since the turn of the nineteenth century.”<sup>88</sup> Kadioglu suggests that Turkish nationalism was not the awakening of Turks to national consciousness. It was rather a project undertaken by intellectuals whose discourse was laden with the dilemma of a choice between imitation and identity stemming from the aforementioned paradox.

In *Art & Revolution*, Leon Trotsky states that all great movements begin as “splinters” of older movements:

‘In the beginning, Christianity was only a ‘splinter’ of Judaism; Protestantism a ‘splinter’ of Catholicism, that is to say, decayed Christianity. The group of Marx and Engels came into existence as a ‘splinter’ of the Hegelian. [...] If these pioneers found themselves able to create a mass base, it was precisely because they did not fear isolation. They knew beforehand that the quality of their ideas would be transformed into quantity. These ‘splinters’ did not suffer from anaemia; on the contrary, they carried within themselves the germs of the great historical movements of tomorrow.’<sup>89</sup>

Trotsky’s argument is applicable to the Turkish case: the creation of the Turkish Republic from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire in 1923 did not occur abruptly. The ‘splinters’ of older movements, from the Young Ottomans to the Young Turks, all

---

<sup>88</sup> Kadioglu, “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and Construction of Official Identity”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1996, pp. 183-85

<sup>89</sup> Trotsky, *Art & Revolution*, Canada 2012, pp. 126-7

carved the path towards the creation of a new, Westernized Turkey and a new Turkish national identity that was separate from the ghost of the six-century long Ottoman Empire. Art, specifically literature, was a major source of inspiration towards the creation of the new Republic, the new identity and the new national language. Literature was both the platform upon which the new ideas were propagated as well as a mirror that reflected the aftermath of these changes. As Trotsky remarks, ‘When an artistic tendency has exhausted its creative resources, creative ‘splinters’ separate from it, which are able to look at the world with new eyes.’<sup>90</sup> In Turkey’s case, the exhausted resources could be considered as Pan-Ottomanism and Pan-Islamism; and the new ‘splinter’ was Turkish nationalism. This thesis examines the emergence of this splinter, as well as the evolution and the aftermath of it through literature.

### **The Evolution of Turkish Nationalism through Literature**

The development of Turkish nationalism had a specific characteristic; it was an idea born and nurtured by the intellectuals of the era. After competing with Pan-Islamism and Pan-Ottomanism, Turkism was the triumphant ideology that enabled the new Republic to be born from the ashes of the so-called “sick man of Europe” and transform what was left of the empire into a Westernized nation. The environment for Turkism’s triumph was nurtured by generations of intellectuals including writers, poets, journalists, philosophers, from Young Ottomans to Young Turks and the intellectuals of the new Republic who later on also wrote extensively about the repercussions of the revolution and the challenges Turkish people had to face during this time of change.

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

The social and historical changes of the period made Westernization the main theme among literary circles. It can be argued that, in this new environment of discussion, dualism prevailed: it was the language of East-West, old-new, idealist-materialist, traditional-modern. The relationship between the “self” and the “other” was represented by these dynamics, and this trend continued into early Turkish Republican literature. With the establishment of the Republic, “Ottoman” and “Islam” became the symbols of the past, and were regarded as obstacles to the process of modernization, something which needed to be overcome.<sup>91</sup> Turkish modernization created “plural others”, among which the primary one was the Ottoman past itself, perceived as the old and backward “other” of the Turkish national identity.<sup>92</sup>

As stated before, Anderson argues that several conditions need to exist simultaneously in order for nationalism to emerge. Anderson highlights that nationality and nationalism are cultural artefacts, and, in order to truly understand them, several points need to be uncovered such as how nationality and nationalism come into being, in what ways their meaning change over time, and why they carry such strong emotional legitimacy.<sup>93</sup>

What were the cultural and political factors that nurtured the growth of the Turkish nation? How did these cultural artefacts make such deep attachments? It is just as important to understand the cultural artefacts that become the foundations of

---

<sup>91</sup>Dundar, “The Eternal Triangle: Women, Men, and the Nation”, *Journal of Turkish Literature*, Issue 5, 2008, p. 119

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, New York 2010, p. 106

nationalism as nationalism itself. When looking at the development of nationalism and national identity in Turkey, there are two main views that dominate the historical perspective. First is the Kemalist view, which was the prevailing traditional view until the 1990s, and reflects the classic foundational ideology of Kemalism.<sup>94</sup> In this view, the Kemalist period of the 1920s and 1930s transformed the post-Ottoman state into a westernized, homogeneous nation-state. Perceived to be a natural part of advanced Western civilisation, this new nation-state rejected the backwards and repressive nature of the Islamic past. However, the second view of Turkey's trajectory as a nation starts not with the formation of the new Turkish Republic, but rather with a much longer reform process that began with the Tanzimat era of 1839. This reform process, which started with the modernization of the army, occurred through the nineteenth century and into the Young Turk period (1908-1918), and World War I.<sup>95</sup> Thus, the early modern Turkish Republic was the result of an evolutionary process.

During the constitutional era of the Young Turks, Turkism came to be regarded as a major school of thought. This trend can be traced throughout the literature of this period. *Uc Tarz-i Siyaset* (Three Ways of Politics), a political essay by Yusuf Akcura (1876 – 1935), was a milestone.

Akcura was exiled to Tripoli while he was still a student at the War College because of his affiliation to the CUP, and fled to Paris where he studied political science. After graduating he returned to Russia from where he sent his essays to Cairo to be published in Ali Kemal's (1867 – 1922) *Turk* newspaper in 1904, who was also a

---

<sup>94</sup> Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, USA 2008, pp. 14-17

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.



writer and a journalist. Akcura makes an objective analysis of the pros and cons of Ottomanism, Turkism and Islamism for the Ottoman state. Thus, for the first time, these alternatives were clearly brought to the attention of the educated Ottoman public.<sup>96</sup>

The first attempts to create a Turkist organization came after the Declaration of Freedom, when the Turkish Society (Turk Dernegi) was founded on 7 January 1909. It was a cultural association with Armenians and European orientalist among its members. On 31 August 1911, the *Turkish Homeland Society* (Turk Yurdu Cemiyeti) was established with the aim at first of providing accommodation for Turkish students. This society published the *Turk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland) periodical, which influenced the development of Turkism immensely.<sup>97</sup> Many Turkish intellectuals had written articles and essays to *Turk Yurdu*, including Ziya Gokalp during 1912-1919<sup>98</sup>.

Another major literary-cultural journal influential in reshaping the public opinion and advocating Turkism was the *Genc Kalemler* (Young Pens); it was one of the earliest examples of what one might call a pan-Turkist publication.<sup>99</sup> It was published in Thessaloniki, still under Ottoman control, from April 1911 to October 1912, and a total of thirty-three issues were printed during this period. It was in this journal that Omer Seyfeddin (1884-1920), a writer, military man, teacher and the pioneer of short

---

<sup>96</sup> Aksin, *Turkey: From Empire to Revolutionary Republic*, London 2007, pp. 84-86

<sup>97</sup> *Turk Yurdu* is still being published today. It has now surpassed issue 349, making it one of the oldest serial publications in Turkey. The older issues can be found in the Beyazit Library Archives.

<sup>98</sup> Inalcik, *Osmanli ve Modern Turkiye*, Istanbul 2013, p. 239

<sup>99</sup> Edited by Kerslake, Oktem & Robin, *Turkey's Engagement with Modernity*: UK 2010, p. 27-33

stories as a genre in Turkish literature as well as one of the leaders of Turkism, started his campaign for a purer Turkish language, rid of the so called Arabic and Persian encumbrances in the composite Turkish Ottoman language. Many contributed to the journal, but three people were involved in its publication. They were Ali Canip, (1887-1967) a poet, writer, politician and one of the pioneers of national literature in Turkey; Omer Seyfeddin; and Ziya Gokalp (1876-1924). The first issue contained the beginning of a debate on literature, which continued for a long time, as well as an investigation into the concept of ‘national literature’. With the second volume, an editorial in the beginning on national language becomes a standard feature for the journal.<sup>100</sup> It can therefore be argued that Atatürk’s later campaign of the 1920s onwards to launch a “pure Turkish” movement to rid the language of Arabic and Persian loanwords and replace them with revivals from old Turkish vocabulary was inherited from the *Genc Kalemler* movement and Seyfeddin’s attempts to purify the Turkish language.

Seyfeddin revolutionised the Turkish language. In this regard, Zafer Toprak has gone as far as to suggest that there was a literary language before Omer Seyfeddin, and there is another one after him.<sup>101</sup> But Seyfeddin believed it was the new generation of Turkish youth who would carry on his language revolution. He hoped to reach out the Turkish youth and introduce them to the idea of Turkish nationalism. In 12 April 1911, he wrote an article for *Genc Kalemler*:

‘Youngsters! The youngsters who sits in narrow, old wooden chairs in gloomy, stuffy classrooms to reach for the future! The duty that awaits you

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Toprak, *Türkiye’de Populizm: 1908-1923*, Istanbul 2013, p.129

is heavy. You shall find a nation that the entire world is working hard to erase. We all know the injustice done towards us by Europe and the entire world. Never forget that Bulgarians, Serbians, Herzegovinians, Greeks who surrounds our country are eagerly waiting for us to suffer. In their schools, they have begun a great propaganda against us and they are educating their youngsters to be an enemy of the Turk.’<sup>102</sup>

Seyfeddin and Canib wanted to increase the circulation of *Genc Kalemler* and use it in their campaign for a “new language”. Gokalp, who was a member in the CUP at the time, supported the political revolution of 10 July 1908. Gokalp was trying to disseminate the same idea with the slogan *yeni hayat* (new life). These three intellectuals, aided by others, started the *yeni lisan* (new language) debate on 29 March 1911. The main objective of the *yeni lisan* movement was to use language and literature as a means of reaching the common people and infusing the idea of Turkish nationalism.<sup>103</sup> The *Turk Yurdu* and *Genc Kalemler* magazines contributed to the creation of an audience interested in national culture, language, literature and history.

Another major group of young Western-educated intellectuals were called *Garpcilar* (The Westerners), who nurtured Turkish nationalism. After the declaration of the second *Mesrutiyet* in 1908, when after a thirty year hiatus the constitution was put back into force again, the freedom of the press allowed ideas and ideologies to be discussed openly, which gave birth to a true enlightenment period (1890-1914) that

---

<sup>102</sup> Seyfeddin, “Yeni Lisan”, *Genc Kalemler*, cilt 2, sayı 1, 29 Mart 1911

<sup>103</sup> Koroglu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, New York 2007, p. 41

set the foundations of the Republic.<sup>104</sup> *Garpcilar* believed that religion forced the public to blindly believe in superstitions, stories and an interpretation of Islam in such a way that it prevented people from embracing the modern civilization.<sup>105</sup> To them, the religion of an intellectual must be good morals, not religion itself, and they proposed a perception of a Muslim who believed in science. *Garpcilar* asserted that Islam, as a religion born in the seventh century, was not suitable for life in the twentieth century; it could not possibly keep up with modern civilizations. They defended ideas of Darwinism against the Koranic version of life and they believed this life mattered more than the afterlife.<sup>106</sup> According to Hanioglu, the ideas and plans of the *Garpcilar* had shaped Ataturk's policy on religion and state during the early Republican era, later becoming the foundations of Kemalism.<sup>107</sup>

I agree that ideas and beliefs of influential intellectuals helped shape Kemalist ideology as well as public opinion. The intellectuals familiarised the public with reforms and gave people examples to look up to. This thesis dissects characters from some of the most influential Turkish novels to demonstrate just how influential these intellectuals' works were as well as to examine what sort of ideal characters they were able to create for Turkish people to strive to emulate.

---

<sup>104</sup> Inalcik, *Osmanli ve Modern Turkiye*, Istanbul, 2013, p. 181

<sup>105</sup> Hanioglu, "Garpcilar", *Studia Islamica* 86, 1997, pp. 133-158

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

## **The Reconstruction of Turkish National Identity in Literature**

Benedict Anderson states: “Awareness of being embedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of ‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity engenders the need for a narrative ‘identity’.”<sup>108</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, the new Turkish government occupied itself with a series of reforms, initiating new and state-administered ways of dressing, writing, talking, and behaving for the new citizens of the Republic. These reforms have commonly been interpreted as measures of Westernization and secularisation. Although the Republican officials aimed to establish closer ties with Europe and place religion under state control, another major motive for their reforms was to sever ties with the Ottoman past. Erasing the everyday habits and memories of the immediate past allowed the Turkish state to establish itself as the founder of a new era as well as the new Turkish identity, although it was a direct inheritor of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>109</sup>

However, the creation of a new westernized identity to replace the Islamic Ottoman identity inevitably caused conflict<sup>110</sup> which dominated Turkish literature for decades to come. Many of the novels which are considered cornerstones of Turkish literature, such as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s *The Time Regulation Institute* (1961), Halide Edib Adivar’s *The Clown and His Daughter* (1935) and Yakup Kadri Karaomanoglu’s *Kiralik Konak* (A Mansion for Rent) (1922), were based on the conflict between the Islamic and the secular Turkish identity.

---

<sup>108</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 205

<sup>109</sup> Ozyurek, *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey*, New York 2007, p. 4

<sup>110</sup> Halide Edib Adivar called this “The Conflict of East and West” and wrote about this issue in many of her novels and articles.

When examined from a historical or political perspective, the first decade of the Kemalist period (1923-1933) may present a portrait of a country reacting relatively well towards some fundamental changes. However, by focusing on this view a certain portion of history is overlooked—that is, the struggle of the Turkish public trying to re-construct a brand-new national identity. When Turks were obliged to cut ties with a six-century long empire and change their mother-tongue literature assisted them in filling the gaps where historical and political perspectives could not. It was exceptionally helpful that many of the actors who were in the war, exile and later on, in the new parliament, were also writers.

Adivar states that she considers the time from 1910 to 1912 as a ‘prelude to my final plunge into nationalism which took an intense form after the disaster of the Balkan War.’<sup>111</sup> This is when she made acquaintance with Yusuf Akcura and Ziya Gokalp, who encouraged her to study the racial background of Turks drawing her further away from the Ottoman past. ‘Cultural curiosity as well as the tyranny of external events was throwing most intellectual Turks back into an intense study of the beginnings of the race,’ she recalled.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, it can be argued that, in addition to losing lands in the Balkans between 1912 and 1913 and the unbalance it caused among the population,<sup>113</sup> through the migration of hundreds of thousands of Balkan Muslims to Anatolia, the greatest effect of the Balkan War was on national identity.<sup>114</sup> The shock,

---

<sup>111</sup> Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, USA 2005, p. 312

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> The Empire lost 155,000 square kilometers of territory; Istanbul was flooded with Muslim refugees as it had not been since 1878. Until the Balkan Wars, the population of the Ottoman Balkans was still 51 percent Muslim but it dramatically increased after the war.

<sup>114</sup> Koroglu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*: New York 2007, p. 47

trauma and negative effect of the Balkan defeat increased sympathy towards Turkish nationalism. This statement by Adivar demonstrates that the nationalist movement, as well as the foundations of the new Republic, were not single handedly manufactured by Ataturk as traditional early scholars and historians had suggested.<sup>115</sup> Instead, the nationalist movement was a collective movement ignited, carried on, and injected into the public by a relatively small group of intellectuals composed of military men, politicians, philosophers, authors and journalists.

According to Adivar, Turkish nationalism, culturally, and rather unintentionally, began with the simplification of the language before the 1908 revolution. She states that it was a movement belonging distinctly to the Ottoman Turks, and was ignited by two writers, in particular: Riza Tevfik Bolukbasi (1869 – 1949), a poet, philosopher and politician; and Mehmed Emin Yurdakul (1869 – 1944), also a poet and politician, who first began to use Turkish meter in poetry and adopt the simple language of the Anatolian Turkish.<sup>116</sup>

Yet, Gokalp's influence on Turkish nationalism and the creation of Turkish national identity was by far more influential than any of his peers'. An ideologue, a poet and Turkey's first sociologist, Gokalp left an enduring legacy as one of the most systematic modern Turkish thinkers.<sup>117</sup> It can be argued that Gokalp's view of national identity—"Even though," he says, "my ancestors come from a region that is

---

<sup>115</sup> It is relatively difficult to distinguish these titles when we speak of the intellectuals of the time. For example, Halide Edib Adivar's second husband, Dr. Adnan Adivar was a professor of medicine but he was also considered as one of the great thinkers of his times, who was also a writer and a politician.

<sup>116</sup>Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, USA 2005, p. 312

<sup>117</sup>Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*, USA 2010, p. 236

not Turkish (*Cermik*), I consider myself a Turk because what determines a man's nationality is not his origin of race but his morals and emotions"—has become the foundation of modern Turkey's nation-citizen perception. Historically, it was the Young Turk movement that truly influenced Gokalp's life and career.<sup>118</sup> Gokalp's main argument was that the new Turkish identity could be Turkish, modern and Islamic all at once, as for him, Turkism, modernism and Islamism were the three fundamental ideals that Turks needed to reconstruct and define their identity with.<sup>119</sup>

John Hutchinson argues that there are two types of nationalism: cultural and political. He suggests that the cultural nationalist perceives the state as accidental, for the essence of a nation lies in its distinctive civilization, which is the product of its unique history, culture, and geographical profile. Nations are primordial expressions of this spirit; like families, they are natural solidarities. Nations are then not just political units but organic beings, living personalities, whose individualities must be cherished in all their manifestations.<sup>120</sup> Nationalist historians are not just scholars, Hutchinson argues, but rather 'myth-making' intellectuals who combine a "romantic" search for meaning with a scientific zeal to establish this on authoritative foundations. The aim of cultural nationalists is rather the moral regeneration of the historic community, or in other words, the re-creation of their distinctive national civilization.<sup>121122</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup> Inalcik, *Osmanli ve Modern Turkiye*, Istanbul 2013, pp. 237-9

<sup>119</sup> Gokalp, *Turklesmek, Islamlasmak, Muasirlasmak*, Istanbul 2014

<sup>120</sup> Hutchinson & Smith, *Nationalism*, UK 1994, pp. 122-124

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Kohn and Geller also identify cultural nationalism as a defensive response by educated elites to the impact of exogenous modernization on existing status orders, which may result in a reassertion of



Hutchinson further argues that cultural nationalists generally seek a ‘moral regeneration, although he connects the emergence of such a movement as a tactical response to the impaired aspirations of political nationalists as a strategy to continue the battle by other means. The leaders of cultural nationalist movements are typically ‘historical scholars and artists’ rather than ‘politicians or legislators’.<sup>123</sup> He describes them as ‘moral innovators’ who rely on national media to spread their message, which usually stresses primordial myths, histories, traditions and rituals, geographies, natural histories and folksongs, to raise national sentiment and bring the diverse cultural parts of the nation together. History is over-stressed, argues Hutchinson and continues: ‘Nations are creative personalities continually evolving in time, and it is to history that its members must return to discover the triumph and tragedies that had formed them.’<sup>124</sup>

On the ground of Hutchinson’s arguments, the nationalist propaganda, in the form of top-down serial rapid reforms led by the Kemalists, can be identified as a hybrid of both political and cultural nationalism. Like political nationalists, they hold an antipathy towards the bureaucratic state, reject existing political and traditional allegiances and aim towards replacing the existing political system with a new one, in this case, imported from the West. Not only do they want to eliminate religion from

---

traditional values in the community. This has occurred in contemporary Islamic countries in the Middle East and Asia, Turkey included.

<sup>123</sup> Hutchinson, “Moral Innovators and the Politics of Regeneration: the Distinctive Role of Cultural Nationalists in Nation-building”, *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, XXX111 (1-2), 1992, p. 110.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

state matters, but they also seek to remove it from the public sphere. Accordingly, the intellectuals of the Turkish nationalist movement were also “myth-makers” who rewrote the cultural history of Turks.

According to Niyazi Berkes (1908-1988), an early Turkish Republican sociologist, civilizational elements assume meaning and function in the life of individuals, only when they are used in the service of culture.<sup>125</sup> Without a cultural basis, civilization becomes merely a matter of mechanical imitation; it never penetrates into the inner life of people and is not fruitful. He elaborates:

‘That was exactly what happened in Turkey and perhaps in other Muslim nations, where civilization had come to be a mere skeleton corroding and annihilating all cultural flesh and blood of the social body. When a new civilization presents itself from the West, this lifeless skeleton lost all meaning and creativity.’<sup>126</sup>

The remedy for this, according to Gokalp, lays in discovering the basic social unit, which is the source of cultural values. For Gokalp, that source was the form of society which he called ‘nation’. The nation, he believes, is that dependent social unit which is at the basis of modern civilization. In other words, modern Western civilization is the international product of several peoples who have reached the stage of nationhood in the course of social revolution. Turkey was in turmoil because it was undergoing a transformation from the theocratic (*ummet*) civilization to a civilization based on

---

<sup>125</sup> Berkes, “Ziya Gokalp: His Contributions to Turkish Nationalism”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Autumn 1954, p. 384.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

modern nationality.<sup>127</sup> After the establishment of the Republican era, Turkish culture was heavily influenced by a culture of Westernization. Therefore, the issue that the Republican era had to face was replacing the ‘theological’ with the ‘national’.<sup>128</sup>

However, Adivar argues that the turmoil was actually caused when Turkey was obliged to let go of “the spiritual values of the East” to evolve into a modern Western country.<sup>129</sup> Cutting cords with a seven hundred year long history and Eastern culture meant that an integral part of their identity would be lost. According to Adivar, the conflict of East and West in the Ottoman Empire finally ended in a victory for the West. She argues:

‘However unpleasant the admission of the fact may be, its truth cannot be challenged. But it is only in the externals, the state and its machinery and to a large extent the civilization that the West has stamped itself ineffaceably. The culture, the soul of the people, that is a plant which can grow and thrive only on its native soil.’<sup>130</sup>

Although I underline the continuity between the modernization attempts in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic; the latter is treated distinctly and as a new beginning. The consideration that the reforms of the early Republican era were the hallmarks of ‘a new instead of an old Turkey’ and thus represent a definite rupture from the past is the main drive for the assessment of this period separately.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Yavuz, *Türkiye’nin Zihin Tarihi*, Istanbul 2009, p. 107

<sup>129</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, pp. 123-124

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Seker, *Vision of Modernity in the early Turkish Republic*, *HAOL*, No 14, October 2007

Although the Empire had gone through the Tanzimat reforms (1839-76) and the Young Turk nationalism (1908-18), the Kemalist Republic was, in fact, radically different from the Ottoman Empire.

Kemalism, which has been nurtured by concepts and doctrines such as progress, laicism, nationalism, Comptian positivism and solidarism, owe a lot to the Enlightenment, French Revolution and nineteenth-century scientism.<sup>132</sup> However, I argue that Ataturk and his associates did not ‘import’ such ideas directly from the West, but in many ways inherited them from the intellectual wealth accumulated by several generations of Ottoman-Turkish reformers and nationalists. Kemalism built on those reform movements which started at the beginning of the nineteenth century and reached its ultimate consequence: the creation of a modern Turkish state,<sup>133</sup> but in a process that was rapid and top-down driven.

Gellner suggests that nationalism is not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, although that is how it does indeed present itself.<sup>134</sup> In reality, it is the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalised, education-dependent high cultures, each of which is protected by its own state. Nationalism, Gellner argues, uses some of the pre-existent cultures, generally transforming them in the process, but it cannot possibly use them all.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, in Turkey’s case, it was not the awakening of the old empire, but the creation of a new

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Kazancigil, Ataturk, (London 2009), p. 37

<sup>134</sup> Gellner, Nations and Nationalisms, UK 1983, p. 48

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

nation and a new national identity with re-shaping the fabric of society. In Ibrahim Kaya's words: 'The Kemalist revolution's first aim was to replace one imagined community, the Islamic *umma*, with another, the Turkish nation whose ultimate goal was to create autonomous modernity.'<sup>136</sup>

### **The New Turkish Women**

As for reforms on women's rights, Atatürk was very particular about the role he wanted for the modern Turkish women to have in the society. Turkish women had earned the right to vote and to be elected earlier than many other women in Western countries. In 1930 they earned the right to vote in municipality elections and in 1934, with the change in the constitution, they earned the right to elect and be elected as congress-people.<sup>137</sup> More importantly, the government encouraged careers for women. There had long been female teachers in girls' schools. Now there were women teaching in mixed schools and universities, practicing medicine and law. Unlike the fez and clerical dress, the veiling of women was never banned. But it was discouraged, the veil giving way to headscarves among other women in the cities and, more generally, in the countryside.<sup>138</sup>

However, as part of a social experiment designed to create a modern, Westernized society out of a mostly rural, conservative population, the Turkish state, founded in 1923, gave women rights still considered radical for the time. But these reforms by the "feminist" state did not evolve as a result of demands originating within society,

---

<sup>136</sup> Kaya, *Social Theory and Later Modernities*, UK 2004, p.46

<sup>137</sup> Ates, *Türk Devrim Tarihi*, Istanbul 2010, p. 242

<sup>138</sup> Andrew, *From the Sultan to Atatürk*, USA 2010, p. 189

but were imposed from above.<sup>139</sup> The state's ideal of the modern Republican woman left out the majority of women beyond a small urbanized elite. Furthermore, state feminism did not concern itself with what happened behind closed doors, but focused on expanding women's public roles. Nevertheless, these dramatic reforms have expanded the realm of possibilities for Turkish women of all classes and allowed development of a more individualist feminism..<sup>140</sup>

Furthermore, one of the most significant implications of modernization mentality for women can be cited as the abolition of *shariah* (religious) laws and the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code (1926), which ensured relatively equal rights in marriage, family and inheritance laws.<sup>141</sup> After these changes, especially with the rights to vote and stand for election, women's participation in public affairs and social-professional life of the country developed rapidly in the cities, but remained very limited in small towns and villages of Anatolia.<sup>142</sup>

There are few women who are as widely known in Turkish history as Halide Edib Adivar. As an activist, a novelist, and a soldier she actively shaped the cultural,

---

<sup>139</sup> White, "State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman", *NWSA Journal*, Volume 15, Number 3, Fall 2003 <sup>11</sup><sub>SEP</sub> p. 145.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Cosar , "Women in Turkish Political Thought: Between Tradition and Modernity", *Feminist Review*, No. 86, 2007, pp.116-117.

<sup>142</sup> Ergil, "Turkish Reform Movement and Beyond (1923-1938)", *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Winter 1975, p. 252.

political and social setting of twentieth-century Turkey.<sup>143</sup> Halide Edib's view of a new nation and new women was articulated in her public speeches, articles and novels and it challenged the views on women in a society at a political crossroads and later on a cultural transition, overwhelmingly dominated by man. Edib's definition of nationalism included the tenets of gender, family and Islam and described each as a necessary component of a successful nation-state. Edib concerned herself with the contemporary issues facing women, such as education, legal rights and political access, and expressed these issues through her writings and participation in politics. During the War of Independence she was specifically concerned with issues regarding nationalism and the ideological debates on Turkism. This thesis will focus on her novels and examine her approach to issues such as nationalism and national identity, religious identity, feminism and the conflict between East and West. Halide Edib Adivar will be one of the main focus points of this thesis because her life and her literary works are great reflection on the era she lived in and the influence she had on the development of Turkish national identity.

## **Conclusion**

According to Smith, during the Tanzimat period the aristocratic Islamic elite failed in their modernization attempts, and consequently lost the Christian then the Muslim parts of the empire. At this point, a new pan-Turkist ideology emerged among the sections of intellectuals, and this was pursued in the period leading up to World War I, by some of the bureaucrats and members of the military after the Young Turk revolution of 1908, hastening the alienation of the non-Turkic parts of the empire.

---

<sup>143</sup> Fortna, *Gec Osmanli ve Erken Cumhuriyet Donemlerinde Okumayi Ogrenmek*, Istanbul 2013, p.

According to Smith, it was this Turkic ideal, shaved of its extra-Anatolian irredentism, that Kemal Ataturk made the basis of his secular, westernizing nationalism:<sup>144</sup>

‘In effect Kemal Ataturk engineered the secession of the Turkish heartlands from the Ottoman empire and caliphate, repudiating Ottomanism and Islam and pushing through a series of modernizing social and cultural reforms in the cities that would redefine the empire as a compact territorial political community aligned to the ethnic nation of Anatolian Turks.’<sup>145</sup>

Kemalists understood that territorial and civic concepts of the nation required a solid basis in a national cultural identity. Therefore, they attempted to furnish the necessary ethnic myths, memories, values and symbols by utilizing the theory of Turkish origins in Central Asia, their unbroken descent from Oghuz Khan and the antiquity of their purified original language, the ‘Sun Language’ theory.<sup>146</sup> Along with this, as already mentioned, many reforms had to be put in place in order to reconstruct a cultural identity as well as a national one. Ataturk’s revolution, in many ways, was a cultural revolution that aimed to shift the country’s roots from East to West—in other words, from a religious identity to a secular one. This revolution was aimed at every aspect of life from language to marriage, from dress code to ways of socializing. In order to succeed in the transition, Ataturk not only had to set a leading example himself, but

---

<sup>144</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, USA 1991, p. 103

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, UK 2010, pp.57-58



he also needed a platform to explain and familiarise people with these changes. This thesis argues that this platform was literature and in order to get a deeper understanding of this cultural revolution, literature must be examined.

## **Chapter 2: Narrative, Turkish Literature and National Identity**

### **Introduction**

There is a close correlation between literature and nationalism, as Benedict Anderson suggests. ‘National print-languages’ were of central ideological and political importance, Anderson highlights, and he goes on to say that ‘the seeds of Turkish nationalism are easily detachable in the appearance of a lively vernacular press’ in Istanbul during the 1870s.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, it could be argued that the seeds of nationalism were planted by literature and later on it was developed and nurtured by intellectuals using literature as a vessel to get their message across. This chapter will examine how Turkish nationalism was influenced and spread, even propagated, by the intellectuals of the time through their literature as well as the importance of studying the theory of narrative in order to have a better understanding of these processes. It will also explain the methodological approach of this dissertation while offering an additional rationale for the study.

The ideas that eventually reshaped the national identity of Turks were primarily forged by a small group of intellectuals and introduced to the public via various publications, thus making the literature a vessel for education as well as a bridge between policy makers and the public. Nationalism in Turkey was nurtured by the most influential intellectuals of this period, such as Ziya Gokalp, Halide Edib Adivar and Omer Seyfettin. Publishing had boomed during the Young Turk Revolution and numerous newspapers and magazines that propagated nationalism began to get published. These works consisted of novels as serials, poems, articles and opinion pieces and had a great influence on the public opinion. When considering the rapid

---

<sup>147</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 75

reforms that occurred one after another once the new Republic was established, it is crucial to analyze and understand the groundwork laid beforehand, which then allowed Ataturk the ability to bring these reforms to life.

In this perspective, this chapter aims to examine the contribution of literature to the nation-building processes as well as to the reconstruction of the national/cultural identity of the Turkish people. While this chapter will analyze literature in a wider sense, it will specifically focus on the novel and its contribution to nationalism. It was the novel that historically accompanied the rise of nations by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles, as Timothy Brennan puts it.<sup>148</sup> In the case of Turkey, the novel was not only an educational tool, it was also a compass for guiding the nation to rebuilding the national and cultural identity, as well as a mirror that reflected the hardships people had to go through during this time. However, first an explanation on narrative theory and the methodological approach adopted in this thesis is necessary.

### **Narrative Analysis and Narrative Theory**

Narrative is an existential part of human existence. From infancy, humans are systematically educated to think through narrative.<sup>149</sup> The understanding of human history is inevitably dependent on this narrative structure and history is usually structured as a narrative rather than a long list of names, occurrences and numbers. The aim of the study of narrative meaning is to make explicit the operations that

---

<sup>148</sup> Nation and Narration, Bhabha, USA 1990, p. 49

<sup>149</sup> Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal*, New York 2012, pp. 22-24

produce its particular kind of meaning, and to draw out the implications this meaning has for understanding human experience.<sup>150</sup>

The term ‘narrative’ carries clear connotations of making, or structuring, but without the ontological implications of fabricating. Within narratives there can be fictions both in the object and the description sense. However, narratives are not necessarily limited to fictions in either sense.<sup>151</sup> Narrative has a broad spectrum: history, biography, news and simply any life event can be considered as narrative. As H. Porter Abbott defines it, “Narrative is the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse, story in an event or sequence of events (the action), and narrative discourse is those events as represented.”<sup>152</sup> Narratology, therefore, is the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectates, events—that is, cultural artifacts that ‘tell a story’.<sup>153</sup> Such a theory enables us to understand, analyze and evaluate narratives in different forms.

The most inclusive meaning of “narrative” refers to any spoken or written presentation. It is the kind of organizational scheme expressed in story form. “Narrative” can refer to the process of making a story, to the scheme of the story, or to the result of the process: stories, tales, histories.<sup>154</sup> Narrative gives shape to our experiences and often manipulates our comprehension of history. The perspective from which a history is told naturally shapes its tone and nudges its audience in a

---

<sup>150</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988, p. 6.

<sup>151</sup> Lamarque, *Narrative in Culture*, London 1990), p. 139

<sup>152</sup> Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, UK 2002, p. 16

<sup>153</sup> Bal, *Narratology*, Canada 2009, p. 3

<sup>154</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988, p. 13

certain direction. The shaping of experience by narrative, indeed the very impulse to tell stories, may suggest primordial, but subliminal, processes underlying even the apparently independent planes of reason or evidence.<sup>155</sup>

Narrative's influence on history, nationalism and identity will be thoroughly examined throughout this chapter but prior to that, a brief look at narrative theory's development in social sciences would be beneficial. In its early years, social science history was obsessed with 'scientific' theories and methods, especially quantitative methods, and regarded the humanities as a theoretical backwash from which nothing of value could be learned.<sup>156</sup> Even in the course of the 1970s and 1980s, the humanistic disciplines were themselves fundamentally transformed, becoming at least as theoretically self-conscious as the social sciences, albeit in ways that some social scientists found uncongenial and even threatening. During the same period, many social science historians became dissatisfied with the intrinsic limitations of quantification, which proved of only slight value in reconstructing the life worlds of the past populations it enumerated and classified so precisely. During the 1970s, many social historians turned toward cultural anthropology, already a quasi-humanistic field, as a source of inspiration. In the 1980s, some social historians began to turn to literary theory and post-structuralist philosophy as well.<sup>157</sup> In short, a significant subset of historically minded social scientists evolved over these past two decades from a general disdain for the humanities toward curiosity about, respect for,

---

<sup>155</sup> Bell, *Narrative in Culture*, London 1990, p. 172

<sup>156</sup> Sewell, "Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities", *Social Science History*, Vol.16 No.3, 1992, pp.480-81.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

and increasingly intellectual collaboration with them. Narrative is one of the emerging points of intersection.

Narrative has become a key concept in social science research with reference to personal histories, biography, coping with illness and framing identity.<sup>158</sup> The products of narrative schemes surround our lives. They fill our cultural and social environment. We create narrative descriptions for ourselves and for others about our own past actions, and we develop storied accounts that make sense of the behavior of others. We are told fairy tales as children and read and discuss stories in school. We read novels and watch motion pictures, and take in hours of television drama.

Narrative plays a key role in politics as well; the political strategist James Carville attributes the loss of John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election, for example, to the lack of a convincing narrative.<sup>159</sup>

Narration of any kind involves the recounting and shaping of events. Description is not enough. A mere catalogue of descriptive sentences does not make a narrative.

Narration has an essential temporal dimension.<sup>160</sup> But what does the corpus of narrative texts consist of? The obvious answer is novels, novellas, short stories, fairy tales, newspaper articles and so forth.<sup>161</sup> However, this could be limiting. For example, there were many times that intellectuals, writers and politicians of the period under investigation have given speeches with carefully constructed narratives to shape

---

<sup>158</sup> Cobley, *Narrative*, New York 2014, p. 212

<sup>159</sup> Safire, "On Language" *The New York Times Magazine* 5, December 2004, p. 36.

<sup>160</sup> Lamarque & Bell, *Narrative in Culture*, London 1990, p. 131

<sup>161</sup> Bal, *Narratology*, Canada 2009, p. 4

and influence public opinion.<sup>162</sup> This chapter, however, will mainly focus on the *narrative text* and examine mainly novels using narrative theory. A narrative text is a text in which an agent or a subject conveys to an addressee (the reader) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, buildings, or a combination thereof.<sup>163</sup> A story is the content of that text, and produces a particular manifestation, inflection and coloring.<sup>164</sup>

One of the most important literary theorists concerned with narrative, Rolan Barthes, believed that narrative performances constitute significant functions. At the individual level, people have a narrative of their own lives which enables them to construe what they are and where they are headed. At the cultural level, narratives serve to give cohesion to shared beliefs and to transmit values.<sup>165</sup> The stories we encounter carry the values of our culture by providing positive models to emulate and negative models to avoid. For example, Ottoman Sultans were always represented as positive models for the public to aspire to. Early prose poems and tales were narrations to parse their characters and highlight their positive traits. The same could be said for Islamdom and the Prophet Mohammad. The Prophet's good traits and characteristics are narrated again and again in Muslim communities in order to set a good example for his *ummah*.

---

<sup>162</sup> A good example here would be the Sultanahmet Demonstrations which were a series of rallies in 1919 at Sultanahmet, Istanbul to protest the occupation of Izmir by Greek forces after the First World War. Many important names of the time gave speeches but one of the most memorable and influential speeches was the one made by Halide Edib Adivar.

<sup>163</sup> Bal, *Narratology*, Canada 2009, p. 4

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988) p. 14

The narration of a life-story offers an alternative sense to politics, not only because it deals with unique persons, but because it illustrates the *interaction* of unique people.<sup>166</sup> Hannah Arendt suggests that the fact ‘that every individual life can eventually be told as a story with a beginning and end is the prepolitical and prehistorical condition of history.’<sup>167</sup> Adriana Cavarero goes one step further and formulates this “prepolitical and prehistorical condition” as the “narratability” of every person, which is in a sense prior to whatever particular story or history that person then lives and leaves behind; prior to politics and history in the conventional sense.<sup>168</sup>

When Cavarero speaks of a ‘narratable self’ she is not speaking of the classical ‘subject’, or of ‘subject formation’. What makes a narration a political act is not simply that this narration invoked the struggle of a collective subjectivity, but rather that it makes clear the fragility of the unique. The uniqueness and the unity of a self, which is disclosed through that self’s actions and words, and which is then narrated as a unique and unified life-story, does not display any of the general characteristics of traditional subjectivity: interiority, psychology, agency, self-presence, mastery and so forth. Rather, the ‘narratable self’ is a unique existent, ‘who’ someone is. Also the ‘narratable self’ is constitutively in relation with others.<sup>169</sup>

---

<sup>166</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, UK 2000, p.10

<sup>167</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, USA 1957, p. 184

<sup>168</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, UK 2000

<sup>169</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, UK 2000, p.10



Narrative has, what Janet Hart calls, a ‘dual role’: it is not only a means of representing life, used self-consciously by historians, novelists, and storytellers, but a fundamental cultural constituent of the lives represented.<sup>170</sup> All people develop a sense of themselves as subjects in part by thinking of themselves as protagonists in stories – of love and marriage, of success, of stoic self-sacrifice, of family obligation, of collective struggle, of religious renewal. Through this, we seek meanings. We do not wish our lives to be a sum of random events and haphazard connections. Narrative can give us the meaning we crave, as narrative is a form of “meaning making”.<sup>171</sup> It is a complex form which expresses itself by drawing together descriptions of states of affairs contained in individual sentences into a particular type of discourse. The drawing together creates a higher order of meaning that discloses relationships among the states of affair. Narrative recognizes the meaningfulness of individual experiences by noting how they function as parts of a whole. Its particular subject matter is human actions and events that affect human beings, which it configures into wholes according to the roles these actions and events play in bringing about a conclusion. Because narrative is particularly sensitive to the temporal dimensions of human existence, it pays special attention to the sequence in which actions and events occur. The narrative scheme serves as a lens through which the apparently independent and disconnected elements of existence are seen as related parts of a whole.<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> Sewell, “Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities”, *Social Science History*, Vol.16 No.3, 1992, p.483

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

If one wishes to attain a deeper understanding of a certain period or event, it is crucial to study the narrative that surrounds it. Examining narratives with different perspectives can give a wider, more accurate picture of what had really occurred and the aftermath. There can be many accounts of the same events: such as in court of law where two parties each give an account of their version of the events. Here, the notion that narrative is a construction, rather than a reconstruction, is underlined. As Mieke Bal points out, “Not that everything ‘is’ narrative; but particularly everything in culture has a narrative aspect to it, or at the very least, can be perceived, interpreted as narrative.”<sup>173</sup>

### **Narrative, History and Literature**

Narrative is used not only to record fictional events but also to record events that actually happened.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, it would be a fair assumption to say that history is understood through narrative. Fundamentally, history can be conceived both as an “extra-textual real” and as a set of signs which make up a discourse.<sup>175</sup> In addition, there is also a practice of writing history which relies not on objective, knowable truth but on a representation of what can be derived from the historical record or archive.<sup>176</sup> That the historical record itself is a discursive entity made up of signs means that it offers a re-presented, selective account of what actually happened.<sup>177</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup> Bal, *Narratology*, Canada 2009, p. 225

<sup>174</sup> Cobley, *Narrative*, New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 29

<sup>175</sup> Bennett, *Outside Literature*, London 1990, p. 53

<sup>176</sup> Bennett, *Outside Literature*, London 1990, p. 49

<sup>177</sup> Cobley, *Narrative*, New York 2014, p. 29

Philosophers such as W. B. Gallie, William Dray and Louis Mink proposed a radical shift in which historical writing was no longer to be understood as a demonstrative discourse to be assessed by formal logic protocols, but rather as a kind of narrative discourse that would be assessed by an alternative form of coherence. They held that narrative was organized according to a configurative protocol whereby units were gathered together into a whole idea. They still understood that narrative represented the real past, but they believed that the organization of the past events into plots was an operation of the discourse itself and that it was the conventions of a narrative discourse that brought the events into a unified whole.<sup>178</sup>

Hayden White raised the issue of whether historical narrative might be best understood as the construction of a story about reality rather than as a direct representation of it. White believed that although historical narrative differed from fictional literature through its tie to documents and traces of events, it could be best understood as a literary reconstruction of the past which included the ideological perspective of the author. Gallie, on the other hand, looked at narrative as a form that history shared with fictional literature. He saw that history reports its findings as narratives and that it is the finished products of historical inquiry which are presented to the public, not the methods by means of which the historical past is constituted or known. Gallie emphasized the continuity between historical and fictional narratives, suggesting that people understand a historical text in the same way that they “follow a fictional story”.<sup>179</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988, p. 59

<sup>179</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988, pp. 51-61

It should be highlighted here that historical writing needs to be examined as narrative rather than as pragmatic discourse. The connection between occurrences, the major actors and characters, and the timeline are all elements of narrative and it is only when history is constructed as narrative that it can be fully understood. The process of seeing human actions as meaningful sequences of events linked together in a casual chain requires cognitive skill, judgment, and the application of previous experiences. When the story-making process is successful, it provides a coherent and plausible account of how and why something has happened. Finding or reconstructing reasons for actions and placing them within the whole of a narrative is more appropriate for explaining individual human actions than the deductive kind of explanation.

The historical narrative, like other discourses, is composed of two kinds of referents: (1) a first order of referent, which are the events that make up the story, and (2) a second order of referent, the plot. Just as the reader of a formal science discourse can recognize that the second order of meaning is created by a particular kind of protocol, such as syllogism or a chronological list, so too the reader of a narrative discourse can recognize that it is created by the kind of story type being used to give meaning to events. The types of stories available for configuring the first-order events are drawn from the repertoire of plots available in a particular culture. When the reader of a historical narrative recognizes the type of story being told in a particular account—an epic, a romance, a tragedy, a comedy for instance—the secondary referent has been comprehended. It is clear then, that discourses or texts contain two orders of information. The first consists of the information contained in the sentences, and the

second is the information generated by the specific type of coherence used to order the sentences into discourse.<sup>180</sup>

In addition to historical narrative, there are two other forms of narrative discourse, namely, literature and myth, which also produce meaning through plot structures. History, literature and myth share the distillates of the historical experience of a people, a group or a culture. These three modes of narrative discourse are grounded in the actual generalized experiences of a people and are the results of cultural attempts to impose a satisfactory, graspable, humanizing shape on experience. The historical narrative takes the type of plots developed by literature and subjects them to the test of endowing real events with meaning. The knowledge provided by narrative history is what results from the application of the systems of meaning originally elaborated by cultures in their myths; in some cultures they are later refined by their literature.<sup>181</sup>

As it is with history, the interpretation of literary works is of considerable importance in shaping cultural tradition. The idea of a national spirit presumes that when a community becomes conscious of itself as human, poetry emerges as the expression of this consciousness. When and where this happens, poetry takes on a form appropriate to the specific nature and fate of each individual nation.<sup>182</sup> Poetry here should not be understood in the narrow sense of the word here as it could apply to any mode of civilized behavior such as religion, politics, law, art, language, and of course, literature.

---

<sup>180</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988, pp. 60-62

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Auerbach, *Time, History, and Literature*, USA 2014, p. 56

Northrup Frye argues that literature is not simply an educational device to depict current social conditions. Neither is it primarily the expression of individual authors. Rather, it is a vehicle for the expression of the most fundamental human desire. Frye's review of the variety of content in stories from historical periods led him to propose that narratives are not simply a creative expression thought up by individual authors. He held that literature contained elements of various modes, genres, symbols, and myths which authors had assimilated into their works without being explicitly aware of the process.<sup>183</sup>

In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha remarks that:

“The linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposed, most commonly signifies a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity. However, the narrative and psychological force that nationness brings to bear on cultural production and political projection is the effect of the ambivalence of the ‘nation’ as a narrative strategy.”<sup>184</sup>

Literature, unlike historical narrative, has the ability to zoom in and out, taking the case of a single individual when needed, or examining a larger group when necessary. Since it does not have the burden of “objectivity” as historical narrative, it can have a strong voice when pleased, thus having a stronger impact on its audience. It may be more relatable to follow a character that the reader can identify with, rather than the historical characters who may appear distant and unattainable, thus, having more

---

<sup>183</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988, p. 74

<sup>184</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York 1994, pp. 201

power to manipulate the thoughts and ideas of its reader, shaping the individuals' identity as well as the cultural tradition as a whole. As Fredric Jameson suggests, 'situational consciousness' or 'national allegory, 'where the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the collectivity itself.'"<sup>185</sup>

What is it for a literary text to have a certain meaning? There are several theories which offer various answers to this question. One might argue that what a literary work means depends on the reader's purpose.<sup>186</sup> Alternatively one may argue that interpretive statements are essentially normative. They can be justified in terms of a particular standard or standards of interpretation, but the question of what the proper standard or standards are is a genuinely normative one: that is, it calls for an implicit or explicit decision by the critics as to how a work *should* be read. From another perspective there are at least three different criteria which jointly determine what a literary work means. The first of these, 'correspondence', requires that an interpretation be based on historical knowledge of the 'subject matter' dealt with in a particular work. The second standard requires an interpretation to accord what it is the author intended. The third is that, on a given interpretation, the various parts of the work form a coherent whole.<sup>187</sup> One of the most widely held views is that the meaning of a work logically depends on the rules of the language in which a text is written and on the coherence and complexity of a literary work under a given interpretation.

---

<sup>185</sup> F. Jameson, "Third World Literature in the era of Multinational Capitalism", *Social Text*, 1986, p.69

<sup>186</sup> Juhl, *Interpretation*, USA 1980, pp. 4-9.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, one might also argue that the meaning of a literary work is simply determined by the author's intentions.

After analysing some of the common theories, one might ask why a conceptual analysis of literary interpretation is useful. Why would such a theory be worth having? By providing an account of the logical structure of statements and argument of a literary work, such a theory makes us aware of what we as critics or readers are doing in interpreting literature. It makes us aware, in other words, of the logical commitments of our claims about the meaning of literary works. Furthermore, a theory of this sort provides the basis for a principled acceptance or rejection of an interpretation of a literary work.<sup>188</sup> Without such a theory it would be difficult to accept or reject the practical criteria to which a critic might appeal in support of his interpretation of a work only on intuitive grounds.

E. D. Hirsch has maintained that the meaning of a literary work is determined by the author's intention:

“Verbal meaning is whatever someone has willed to convey by a particular sequence of linguistic signs and which can be conveyed (shared) by means of those linguistic signs.”<sup>189</sup>

Hirsch also introduces a distinction between meaning and significance of a text. He suggests that meaning is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his or her use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the sign represents.

---

<sup>188</sup> Juhl, *Interpretation*, USA 1980, pp. 10-11

<sup>189</sup> Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, New Haven 1967, p. 31



Significance, on the other hand, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception, or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable.<sup>190</sup> Therefore, it could be argued that while the meaning of a text is dependent on its author, the significance of the text arises from its relationship and interaction with its reader.

Another important question that needs to be asked is the relationship between the author and the work. Is it safe to assume that if a work expresses or implies certain propositions, then the author is committed to the truth of those propositions and to the corresponding beliefs? It follows that by writing a work which expresses or implies certain propositions, the author is asserting those propositions; their expression and beliefs are real, not pretense.

The *Intentionalist thesis* suggests that in order to understand a work one must correctly identify the basic illocutionary act that the author is performing and hence ascertain what he or she intended to convey.<sup>191</sup> But this is only the beginning of an interpretation. It tells very little about the work. Its life lies in the details; their cumulative effect constituted the ‘achieved meaning’. Some questions that might be worth asking here are: what is the relation between the propositions expressed by some work and the author’s beliefs? If a proposition is expressed by a work, who is expressing it? Can a proposition expressed by a work properly be said to have been asserted?

---

<sup>190</sup> Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, New Haven 1967, p. 8

<sup>191</sup> Juhl, *Interpretation*, USA 1980, p. 129

The opposing view is Wayne Booth's "implied author."<sup>192</sup> According to Booth, an author creates, in the act of writing, a particular work, "an ideal, literary version of the real man." This "implied author", or the actual author's "second self", present in or behind a particular work, "is always distinct from the 'real man'" and it differs as well from the implied authors of his or her other works.<sup>193</sup> It is the implied author, not the real person, who is expressing the propositions which the work conveys. When examining Turkish literature, focusing on the body of work that had been produced between the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the declaration of the new Republic, it might be appropriate to suggest that the theory that best suits this study is the intentionalist theory. As a problem-solving strategy that allows for inferential shortcuts and streamlined judgment protocols, people in multiple domains and activities regularly take up the intentional stance toward persons, objects, or artifacts that they construe as instantiating or emanating from intentional systems.<sup>194</sup> In fiction, it is the author's stance that is highlighted; the narrative is intertwined with the author's thoughts, beliefs and her intentions.

Turkish authors largely contributed to the body of literature to manifest their ideals and beliefs, and the agenda was aligned with the reconstructing of Turkish national identity. The literary scene from this period was largely concerned with the message the work conveyed rather than aesthetic concerns such as style, structure,

---

<sup>192</sup> Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, USA 1961, pp. 70-77

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Herman, "Narrative Theory and the Intentional Stance", *Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, Volume 6, Number 2, June 2008, p. 237.

characterization and plot. These were novels, short stories, poems and plays written to serve a purpose and that purpose was to declare its creator's mind.

Talat Sait Halman claims that,

“Revolution, innovation, and Westernization have been the driving forces of the Turkish nation in the twentieth century. In the transformation of sociopolitical structure, economical life, and culture, the men of letters have served not only as eloquent advocates of progress, but also as catalysts, precursors, pioneers – and creators of brave new ideas of innovation.”<sup>195</sup>

This statement highlights that Turkish intellectuals of the period had a duty to perform, and their work was the mediator which enabled this sociological change to infuse the minds of the Turks. Kemal Karpat suggests that this modern Turkish literature was very closely tied to the country's aim to westernize and was used as a vessel to enroot and spread these ideas.<sup>196</sup> He also points out that Ziya Gokalp was an advocate of using literature to spread his ideas and plant them in society, and many intellectuals followed in his footsteps.

Narrative theorists such as Roland Barthes indicated ways in which the study of narrative could be fruitfully combined with the study of the beliefs, norms and values that constitute what has come to be termed *ideology*. For example, Barthes's 1966 essay “Introduction to the Structuralist Analysis of Narratives”<sup>197</sup> pointed to the way

---

<sup>195</sup> Halman, *Contemporary Turkish Literature*, USA 1982, p. 21

<sup>196</sup> Karpat, *Osmanlı'dan Gunumuze Edebiyat ve Toplum*, Istanbul 2011

<sup>197</sup> Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, Glasgow 1977, pp.79-124

in which a certain ideological conception of identity or personhood influenced previous understandings of the concept of 'character' in narrative. Specifically, Barthes argued that literary critics began to view characters as beings with a psychological essence rather than agents in narrated worlds, defined by what they do or how they act.

According to the structuralists, the most abstract level of a narrative is called a story or a *fabula*. It consists of three basic story-elements: action or events; actants (roles performed by characters); and the setting in time and space. These are all studied through binary oppositions. Thus A. J. Greimas distinguishes between six agents divided into three binary pairs: subject versus object; sender (the one initializing the activity of the subject) versus receiver (the one benefiting from the activity of the subject); and helper versus opponent.<sup>198</sup> This model splits up roles into clearly delineated units and therefore has its own ideological leanings, but it also enables the narratologist to see the ideological workings of a story. For instance, if female characters are always assigned the object role, and male characters are to play the subject part, this would give an unmistakable indication of gender ideas and values.<sup>199</sup>

In this sense, it is of great value to examine the characters in Turkish novels in order to get a better understanding of the ideas and values that were surrounding the different groups of people in society as well as the characters they were meant to evolve into by westernizing. Studying some of Halide Edib Adivar's novels, for example, it becomes apparent that she was hoping to inspire women to stand up

---

<sup>198</sup> Greimas, *Structural Semantics*, USA 1983

<sup>199</sup> Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, UK 2007, p. 220

for themselves in the face of the backwards mentality of the Ottoman Empire, claim respect within their families and marriages, get educated and give back to society in anyway they can.<sup>200</sup> Although this study will mainly use the intentionalist theory, it will also rely on structuralist theory when needed in order to conduct an in-depth examination of the novels.

Time and space of the story level are usually studied in terms of dualism, such as light versus dark, high versus low, open versus closed. These divisions may have ideological implications of their own but, as far as the story goes, the implications only become obvious when they are combined with the actants and the actions. For instance, actions and actants associated with dark and closed spaces may be more negative than those in open and light spaces.<sup>201</sup> Another good example from Turkish literature here would be Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu and his celebrated novel *Kiralik Konak*<sup>202</sup> (A Mansion for Rent). In this novel, the reader is introduced to an old wooden mansion that is in very bad shape, decaying day by day as darkness has fallen upon it. Karaosmanoglu is clearly drawing a parallel between the Ottoman Empire

---

<sup>200</sup> Edib's celebrated novel *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore) is a good example of this. The leading character, Aliye, is the embodiment of all the good virtues and an ideal model for the modern Turkish woman. On the other hand, Dr. Kemal H. Karpat suggests that, in Turkish literature, women are still portrayed as second-class citizens. He underlines that woman in novels only exist as supporting characters, as love interests of men or to highlight certain aspects of male characters. In this sense, Greiman's model enables us to see the real place of women in Turkish society by looking at how they are portrayed in the literature.

<sup>201</sup> Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, UK 2007, p. 221

<sup>202</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013

and the mansion; using this mansion as a setting to highlight the last period of the Empire.

While using setting and characters, narrative fiction also relies on point-of-view to communicate with its audience. The emphasis on point of view represents a shift in focus from the underlying plot structures to the devices an author uses to solve problems in the presentation of the thoughts of the novel's character. The point-of-view theorists have focused on the constructive theory of an author as the sender of the message. The author is more than a tool by means of which the grammar constructs a tale; he or she is a creative force in the construction of the story and the source of the devices used in its telling.<sup>203</sup> Significantly, an author's point of view involves a distinctive relationship with the characters in the story. To state the matter in an oversimplified way, authors are allowed only two options regarding the choice of a point of view when they tell a story. They can use either the first person or the third person. The first-person option involves speaking through letters, journals, dialogues and monologues, and uses the present tense to give the reader a sense of immediate involvement. This approach is termed the "scene" and differs from summary, or "narration" which is always in the past tense. The third-person presentation provides the author with the advantage of being aware of everything and thus able to reveal things not known to any of the characters and to comment on the action.<sup>204</sup>

---

<sup>203</sup> Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science*, New York 1988, pp. 94-96

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

In Turkish literature of the Republican era, it is generally a third-person point of view where the author is all omnifiscient and his or her existence can be felt behind all characters and during every scene. The authors from this time may have consciously chosen this perspective to stay in control of all the characters and situations through the novel and make sure the message of the narrative, therefore the ideology of the creator of this narrative, makes it through to its audience.

Hayden White argues:

“All written discourse is cognitive in its aims and mimetic in its means. And this is true [...] of poetry no less than of prose, and even of those forms of poetry which seems to illuminate only ‘writing itself’. In this respect, history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical representation.”<sup>205</sup>

White asks whether events in the world always appear to us as mere sequence, one thing after another, or as narratives with beginnings, middles and ends.<sup>206</sup> For White, the narrative impulse, both in fiction and historical accounts, might encapsulate a deeper human desire for a ‘moral’ representation, a sequence with an outcome.

If ideology lays claim to an oppressive amount of meaning, then textuality is there to reveal its hidden places of “castration”. Textuality exposes those slippages, cracks and self-mutilations that are as inevitable to ideological discourse as to any other, but which such discourse must at all cost repress; turning the frayed edge of ideology to

---

<sup>205</sup> White, *Topics of Discourse*, London 1987, p. 122

<sup>206</sup> White, *On Narrative*, London 1981, p. 23

the light, textuality plucks away at the points where it may be unraveled, skeptically refusing its apparent buoyancy in the name of a cunning script that will embrace no meaning as self-sufficient.<sup>207</sup> Although devices of narrativity such as plot, story, sequence and space are commonly thought to be appropriate for accounts which are not true, historians have deliberately endorsed narrative into their practice to demonstrate process and causality in real, true happenings. In case of both fiction and historical non-fiction there is always a representation of some prior events.<sup>208</sup> This is the fundamental ground of this thesis, that within the fictional realm there is an historical account. And when dissected and examined, these fictional works tell a story of how the Turkish nation was rebuilt and Turkish national and cultural identity was reconstructed along with its discontents.

### **Narrative, Nation Building and Identity**

The key use of narrative concerns identity.<sup>209</sup> Narrative has played an important role in identity-formation for a long time. Memory embodied in narrative made a significant contribution to the formation and maintenance of the self-image of peoples, especially when writing may not have been available physically to store records of past events and details of a people's most cherished ideas. Narrative is therefore also bound with the notion of large scale identities such as nation.<sup>210</sup> Bhabha describes nation as,

---

<sup>207</sup> Eagleton, *Literature and Society*, Baltimore 1980, p.149

<sup>208</sup> Cobley, *Narrative*, New York 2014, p. 30

<sup>209</sup> Brockmeier & Carbaugh, *Narrative and Identity*, Amsterdam 2001

<sup>210</sup> Cobley, *Narrative*, New York 2014, p. 36



“...a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.”<sup>211</sup>

Anthony Smith argues that a sustainable notion of nation requires a historic territory or homeland for a people, a common public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members, and a common economy; but it also requires common myths and historical memories.<sup>212</sup> The latter uses narrative as its vehicle, whether it is in the oral or written word, and people rely on narrative to construct, transfer and sustain myths and historical memories.

Benedict Anderson suggests that narrative also helps to bind individuals in a nation by offering the concept of a ‘meanwhile’.<sup>213</sup> The narrative structure whereby characters’ lives might be narrated such that some of them are intimately known to each other, and others are not, is analogous to the ‘imagined community’ of a nation. He goes on to say:

“As with modern persons, so it is with nations. Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity... engenders the need for a narrative of ‘identity.’ In the secular story of the

---

<sup>211</sup> Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, London 2000, p. 19

<sup>212</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, UK 1991, p. 14

<sup>213</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London 1991, pp. 24-33

‘person’ there is a beginning and an end... Nations, however, have no clearly identifiable births, and their deaths, if they even happen, are never natural.”<sup>214</sup>

One of the main criticisms that Anderson faces is the problematic approach of the “imagined community”. Nations will construct the idea of a community in different ways. While the idea of nations not being natural or inherit might be valid, Eric J. Hobsbawm argues that nationalism emerges before nations, not the other way around.<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, it could be argued that the concept of “community” in the Anderson’s work has not been explored to its full extent, however, the idea that Imagined communities arose with print-capitalism and the mass publication of texts is certainly applicable in Turkey’s case. The printed word was especially significant in consolidating the new language.

In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*.<sup>216</sup> Etienne Balibar states that, “The history of nations, beginning with our own, is always already presented to us in the form of a narrative which attributes to these entities the continuity of a subject.”<sup>217</sup> Vilashini Coopan highlights that, as defined by Balibar, the nation form owes its

---

<sup>214</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London 1991, p. 5

<sup>215</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, Cambridge 1990, p.10

<sup>216</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York 1994, p. 209

<sup>217</sup> Balibar, *The Nation Form*, New York 1991, p. 86

existence to a retrospective illusion, a fiction of collective identity produced by a regular movement from the present into the past and paralleled by a spatial equivalent.<sup>218</sup> In *The Necessary Nation*, Gregory Jusdanis describes a premature elision and conceptual flattening of the nation in contemporary critical discourse and wonders whether defamation of the nation may not go hand in hand with its portrayal as an ideological construct, that is “an invention, a fantasy, or a narration.”<sup>219</sup>

Literature’s ability to function as a signifier of national identity or heritage can therefore not be denied.<sup>220</sup> It is with the invention of printing, the rise of literacy and the development of markets for printed texts during the nineteenth century in Europe that the novel increasingly became the form with a national representation and dissemination both in Europe and in its colonies.<sup>221</sup> The same trend could be traced in Turkey’s progress with modernization. During the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, magazines and newspapers were widely used as vehicles to distribute new ideologies. And after that they became the biggest platform for propaganda.

Since nationalism and narrative are closely connected to each other, this places intellectuals in a critical position. To what extent are intellectuals artisans of nationalism? Theories of state formation have indeed often appreciated the role of intellectualism in governance and have pointed towards a kind of codependency

---

<sup>218</sup> Coopan, *Worlds Within*, California 2009, p.1

<sup>219</sup> Jusdanis, *The Necessary Nation*, USA 2001), p. 5

<sup>220</sup> Dering, *Nation and Narration*, London 2000, p. 138

<sup>221</sup> Carey-Webb, *Making Subjects*, New York 1998, p. 11

between state and intellectuals.<sup>222</sup> The rise of modern nationalism involved new roles for intellectuals, although these have been recognized in different ways depending on varying theories of nationalism and on differing cases of nationalism. If we trace the origins of nationalism back to the early modern period, for example, we witness the emergence of imperial law, political philosophy, cartography, history, and grammar, each of which had its intellectual practitioners.<sup>223</sup>

Gellner argues that nationalism is directly connected to the rise of industry and that industrial society positively requires shared systems of communication in a way that sets it apart from all predecessors. For Gellner, the modern state requires a mobile, literate, culturally standardized, interchangeable population. The nation-state, with its schools and its national language, is the mold for this process of cultural standardization.<sup>224</sup> In Hobsbawm's account, nationalism emerged along with popular politics and revolution<sup>225</sup>, a situation that in some respects implies the emergence of what Gramsci called "organic intellectuals," that is, intellectuals whose role is to formalize and annunciate a class position within a totalizing language of community (or nation).

In the colonial world, the role of intellectuals in the formation of nationalism has taken a related but distinct course. Edward Said argued that orientalist intellectuals had a central role in contracting images of alterity that underwrote modern

---

<sup>222</sup> Boyer & Lomnitz, "Intellectuals and Nationalism: Anthropological Engagements", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 34 (2005), p. 110

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, NEW York 1983

<sup>225</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1970*, UK 1990

imperialism, obscuring the connections between the metropole and its colonies.<sup>226</sup>

The pivotal role that intellectuals have played in the development of nationalism has its dialectical counterpart in their reliance on nationalism as a rhetorical device that is required to further their specific interest.<sup>227</sup>

Intellectuals' role in the rise of Turkish nationalism and the reconstruction of Turkish national identity is vital. Such a pivotal shift in culture (from Islamic empire to a secular nation-state) required the assistance of intellectuals to reach and receive acceptance from society, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk relied heavily on the intellectuals from the era—the writers, poets, educators and sociologists—for this agenda's success. Newspapers, magazines and novels were the main agents of distribution.<sup>228</sup>

The rise of the modern nation-state in Europe in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries is inseparable from the forms and subjects of imaginative literature. On the one hand, the political task of modern nationalism directed the course of nationalism, leading through the romantic concepts of 'folk character' and 'national language' to the divisions of literature into distinct national literatures. On the other hand, literature participated in the formation of nations through the creation of 'national print media' – the newspaper and the novel.<sup>229</sup>

---

<sup>226</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, New York 1978

<sup>227</sup> Boyer & Lomnitz, "Intellectuals and Nationalism: Anthropological Engagements", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 34 (2005), p. 112.

<sup>228</sup> Novels were mainly published as serials in magazines before they were published as books, thus magazines had a big audience that wished to read non-fiction as well as fiction.

<sup>229</sup> Brennan, *Nation and Narration*, London 2000, p. 48

Anderson likens the newspaper to a novel without a coherent plot, suggesting that the way a newspaper links disparate events together because of their coincidence on a given calendar date is rather like the novel's simultaneous juxtaposing of characters and events. The experience of reading a newspaper connects anonymous people together, all consuming similar or identical versions of a day-by-day clocked history. The "fiction" of the newspaper, and the "fiction" of the novel are in these ways similar, they seep "quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations."<sup>230</sup>

It was the novel that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the 'one, yet many' of national life, and by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly boarded jumble of languages and styles. Socially, the novel joined the newspaper as the major vehicle of the national print media, helping to standardize the language, encouraging literacy, and remove mutual incomprehensibility. But it did much more than just that. Its manner of presentation allowed people to imagine the special community that was the nation. It was in the novel that previously foreign languages met each other on the same terrain, forming an unsettled mixture of ideas and styles, themselves representing previously distinct peoples now forced to create the rationale for a common life.<sup>231</sup>

Literature, or narration in general, plays an important role of a nation's coming into being. It therefore had a significant influence on constructing the national identity by

---

<sup>230</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London 1983, p. 40

<sup>231</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London 1983, pp. 49-50

bringing together the heritage associated with past memories with the desire to live together in the future. The status of identity in narrative and narrating as well as the importance of alterity must be mentioned in order to have a better understanding of how narrative influences this nation and national identity building process. After all, issues of identity and alterity are relevant to all narratives.<sup>232</sup>

The new approaches define narrative and narrativity as concepts of social epistemology and social ontology. These concepts posit that it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities.<sup>233</sup> Natural narrative creates and elaborates an image of the self which the narrator wants others to recognize as his or her character or personhood. Narratives construct selfhood as individuality and functional role.<sup>234</sup> Such identities are imaginary in much the same way as Benedict Anderson's imaginary homelands of national and/or ethnic origin. They do not really exist independently of a conversational context since they are constituted in interaction with others, in fluid self-presentation. They also deliberately elide or camouflage possible negative facets of the self.

Narrative identity, therefore, is a part of a general performative identity which we create inside our social roles – as teachers, as wives, as parents, as drivers, etc. We also define ourselves through these roles. Identity should therefore be used in the

---

<sup>232</sup> Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, UK 2007, p. 206

<sup>233</sup> Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No.5, 1994, p. 606.

<sup>234</sup> Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, UK 2007, pp. 260-216.

plural—that is, identities—to acknowledge the multiplicity of roles and their contextual relevance. None of these roles allows one to establish a real self, a definite identity. Rather, identities are constituted in the interplay of individuals with other people in social contexts of family, work, study and leisure activities.<sup>235</sup>

Many scholars, such as Said and Bhabha, have studied the effects of colonialism and post colonialism on identity through narrative. In *Orientalism*, Said suggests that in the writings of philosophers, historians and essayists there is ‘character-as-designation’ appearing as physiological-moral classification and such designations gather power during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when they are aligned with character as generic type.<sup>236</sup> The major point of his theory is to demonstrate that the Near East has been subjected to a totalizing and disempowering glance by European scholars and politicians. Within an orientalist framework, people living in the East were taken to be all the same. Colonial knowledge saw them as racially, morally, intellectually and culturally inferior. This belief in the inferiority of the native other served as an excuse for disregarding these peoples’ cultural achievements and for violating their civilization by imposing British (or French) culture and language on them, subjecting them by military force and keeping them in the position of colonies dependent on their supposedly wiser and benevolent mother countries.<sup>237</sup>

On his collective essays titled, *Reflections on Exile*, Said remarks that,

“It is important to note that much of the early cultural resistance to imperialism on which nationalism and independence movements were

---

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, London 2003, p. 119

<sup>237</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, London 2003, pp. 40-42.



built was salutary and necessary. I see it essentially as an attempt on the part of oppressed people who had suffered the bondage of slavery, colonialism, and – most important – spiritual disposition, to reclaim their identity.”<sup>238</sup>

Although Turkish nationalist and independence movements could not be considered as a war against colonialism,<sup>239</sup> it was still an attempt to rebel against oppressed people, and although they did not *reclaim* their identity, they wished to *re-construct* it. Therefore, it could be argued that some of the theories on post-colonialism also apply in the case of Turkey. The narrative from this time eagerly encouraged people to westernize and modernize while staying true to their spiritual disposition. The famous quote of the great Turkish sociologist Ziya Gokalp, “We come from the East, we go to towards the West,” is a good summary of the period’s narrative.

Bhabha explains this phenomenon as *mimicry*, where the native would like to be accepted as an equal by the colonizer so “he wants to become the same, but is never accepted as quite the same even if (or precisely because) he tries to be more British than the British. Since the colonizer cannot see the native as his equal but wants to keep him in a position of inferiority, the mimicry of the native is doomed to failure.”<sup>240</sup> The conflict between colonizer and colonized consists of clash of

---

<sup>238</sup> Said, *Reflections on Exhile*, London 2012, p. 377

<sup>239</sup> It wouldn’t be accurate to consider Turkey a colony. It could be argued that there was an unsuccessful attempt to colonize it after World War I. This is reflected on the literature, because unlike postcolonial literature, which revolts against the colonizer and fights to preserve authentic native identity, Turkish national identity strived to resemble Western identity as closely as possible.

<sup>240</sup> Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, UK 2007, p. 268

ideologies. The handling of this clash can be managed in an ideologically significant manner, emphasizing one worldview to the exclusion of the other or illustrating the irresolvable conflict between them.<sup>241</sup>

As Halide Edib Adivar remarks, “although this conflict could be studied in any part of the world, in the history of any and every nation, still nowhere is it so salient and clear in some of its phases as in Turkish history.”<sup>242</sup> A great desire to be like a Westerner, receive a Western education, be involved with arts and Western literature and socialize like Westerners (socializing with the opposite sex, having relations before marriage, consuming alcohol as a woman with a men) constitutes a large portion of the literature produced, both by male and female authors. However, the intriguing point is that, as will be explained later in the thesis, characters who mimic Westerners in a superficial manner usually face unpleasant ends such as humiliation, alienation and sometimes death. However, characters who adopt the more profound values of the Western world, such as education, philosophy and literature, while not compromising their Eastern values, meet better ends in terms of their legacy and how they are remembered.

Struggles over narrations are struggles over identity. So how does narration construct identity? Narrativity demands that we discern the meaning of any single event only in temporal and spatial relationships to other events.<sup>243</sup> Indeed, the chief characteristic of

---

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 1

<sup>243</sup> Somers, “The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach”, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No.5, pp. 616-617.

narrative is that it renders understanding only by *connecting parts* to a constructed configuration or a social network of relationships composed by symbolic, institutional, and material practices. The connectivity of parts is precisely why narrativity turns “events” into *episodes*, whether the sequence of episodes is presented or experienced in anything resembling chronological order. This is done through “emplotment”. It is emplotment that gives significance to independent instances, not their chronological or categorical order. And it is emplotment that translates events into episodes. As a mode of explanation, casual emplotment is an account of why a narrative has the story line it does.<sup>244</sup>

Another crucial element of narrativity is its *evaluative criteria*.<sup>245</sup> Evaluation enables us to make qualitative and lexical distinctions among the infinite variety of events, experiences, characters, institutional promises and social factors that impinge on our lives. In the face of a potentially limitless array of social experiences deriving from social contact with events, institutions and people, the evaluative capacity of emplotment demands and enables selective appropriation in constructing narratives. A plot must be thematic. The primacy of this narrative theme or competing themes determines how events are processed and what criteria will be used to prioritize events and render meaning to them.

The “narrative” dimension of identity presumes that action can only be intelligible if we recognize the various ontological and public narratives in which actors are emplotted. Narrative identities are constituted by a person’s temporally and spatially

---

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

variable place in culturally constructed stories composed of rules, practices, binding and unbinding institutions and the multiple plots of family, nation, or economic life. Most importantly, however, narratives are not incorporated into the self in any direct way; rather they are mediated through the enormous spectrum of social and political institutions and practices that constitute our social world.<sup>246</sup>

All narratives manifest subjecthood, and these intertwine with the construction of identity. Yet identity becomes notable only where set into relief against one or more others; others that can be non-human such as landscape, nature, the city, society; or human subjects.<sup>247</sup> The question of identification is the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image, not the affirmation of a pre-given identity.<sup>248</sup> Therefore, in order to express any kind of identity, it is crucial to put it in a narrative frame. In Turkey's case, the transformation of identity was both influenced and reflected by narrative and narrative became the platform for forging new ideas, reconstructing identities and propaganda. In the case of Turkey, narrative was part of the building blocks of the new nation depicting the struggle that Turkish people endured while building it. Without narrative, there would be a sea of data and information, but without structure to give it any meaning. This thesis aims to examine the national narrative through literature to understand how this data came together to tell the story of the Turkish nation.

---

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, UK 2007, p. 271

<sup>248</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York 1994, p. 64

## **Conclusion**

The novel helped to standardize language, encourage literacy and remove mutual incomprehensibility. Its manner of presentation allowed people to imagine the specific community that was the nation. Throughout history, the written word has been used as a vessel to introduce and familiarise new ideas. Consequently, many authorities have banned books in order to stop new ideas from reaching people. During the repressive reign of Abdulhabid II, the Ottoman press was under heavy censorship in order to prevent new ideas such as nationalism, modernism or revolution to spread. However, with the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, press censorship was lifted to a large extent and this had rapid consequences. The intellectuals of the era, the writers, the poets and activists became the leaders of public opinion and they infused followers with the idea of Turkish nationalism which enabled Mustafa Kemal to win the Independence War and establish a new Republic.

However, the role of literature did not end with the establishment of the new secular Turkey. Literature once again played a large role during the post independence war nation-building process and the further reconstruction of Turkish national/cultural identity. Literature was both the vessel that explained the changes to the public and it was a platform where the public's reaction and struggle to cope with these changes was reflected.

This chapter examined the role of narrative in nation-building process and national identity and analyzed narrative theory in order to establish that literature helped shape the new Republic of Turkey. As Home K. Bhabha suggests, nationalism is best understood not by aligning it with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with

large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which it came into being. In this sense, without a deep understanding of Turkey's literature, it would have been impossible to understand how this nation and national identity came into existence.

## Chapter 3: Literature of the New Republic

### Introduction

The first two chapters examined the evolution of nationalism in Turkey and the role of literature in this process through theories of nationalism and narrative. The struggle with the reconstruction of the new Turkish national and cultural identity, the conflict of Eastern values with Western modernism, the inevitable generational gap caused by rapid Westernization and the devastation caused by years of war, followed by a dramatic revolution were recurrent themes in early Republican literature. This chapter aims to analyze such themes in depth along with the societal reforms that took place in the domains of clothing, civil code, change of alphabet and education while dissecting two of the classic novels from this period: *Tatarcik* by Halide Edib Adivar and *Kiralik Konak* (A Mansion for Rent) by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu. Both authors played crucial roles during the rise of nationalism and reconstruction of Turkish national identity. They were outspoken champions of Turkish nationalism and used literature as a platform to propagate their ideas. Let us remember that Atatürk's revolutions had a great impact on the new Turkish identity. Adivar and Karaosmanoglu analyse the effects of these revolutions on the characters they create, namely from the perspective of a conflict between East and West.

Their characters struggle aligning their Eastern past, values and traditions with Western manners and modernism. In the end, they are either alienated or degenerated as a result of "misinterpreting" the idea of Westernization; and only a few succeed in sticking to their Eastern values while benefiting from Western ideas and education. This chapter also looks at how these characters are drawn in order to observe their struggles and the aftermath of the overall Westernization process.

The generation gap is dominant theme in Adivar and Karaosmanoglu's. They portray the fate of three generations who were exposed to the reconstruction of Turkish identity. This chapter uncovers Adivar and Karaosmanoglu's intentions and perspectives on different generations in order to reveal the impact of literature on national identity and the nation-building process.

### **The Unsurpassable War, the Revolution and the Aftermath**

Contemporary Turkish literature was inherently associated with the country's drive for modernization and Westernization, and it served as a mediator for planting and generalizing modern reforms. This literature appears committed to progress and transformation and takes its inspiration from modern reforms.<sup>249</sup> From the beginning of the Tanzimat reforms, the goal to modernize and adopt Western standards dominated Turkish literature. Regardless of different viewpoints, this trend remained as a common ground in the literary scene throughout World War I, the Turkish War of Independence and into the establishment of the new Republic of Turkey.

When setting out to reconstruct a national identity for the new Republic, Atatürk heavily relied on the intellectuals of the era to be the mediators between the public and the reforms he enforced. Writers such as Adivar, Karaosmanoglu, Omer Seyfettin and Resat Nuri Guntekin were all actively involved in politics during these turbulent times and they used their pens to assist the public in embracing the new identity and

---

<sup>249</sup> Karpat, "Social Themes in Contemporary Turkish Literature Part I", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1960, p. 29.



modernism, but also to reflect the consequences these rapid reforms created on the Turkish psyche.

The Turkish transformation had two dominant narratives: first, the heroic story of the War of Independence and the rapid Westernization process that followed, and, second, the denial story of the Ottoman identity and its 800 years of traditions and customs, while trying, almost desperately, to fit into the standards of the West as imposed by the country's elites. This dual narrative is often reflected in the literature of the era, and during its aftermath. The Ottoman past is disdained for its "backwardness" and religiosity, while the new Turkish state initiate a series of drastic reforms, intended to erase and nullify the historical legacy in order to secularize Turkish society.<sup>250</sup> This leads to a rupture in society, which is reflected in the literature as a generation gap, an identity crisis and a conflict between East and West.

Benedict Anderson suggests that "Nationalism has to be understood, by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being".<sup>251</sup> To this Homi K. Bhabha adds that, "The nation's 'coming into being' as a system of cultural signification, as the representation of social *life* rather than the discipline of social *polity*, emphasizes this instability of knowledge."<sup>252</sup> Both highlight the importance of the cultural aspect of nationalities and the creation of national identities. In fact, when

---

<sup>250</sup> Robins, *Interrupting Identities*, USA 2013, pp. 68

<sup>251</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 19

<sup>252</sup> Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, London 2000, p. 2

it comes to bringing peoples together as a nation, there has to be common ideologies and goals, which should bind them together. Creating a cultural unity is of immense importance.

Anthony Smith suggests that, a ‘national identity involves some sense of political community and one of the functions it fulfills for groups and individuals is the socialization of the members as ‘nationals and citizens’.<sup>253</sup> In today’s world, this is accomplished by a compulsory, standardized, public mass education system.<sup>254</sup> However, from the Tanzimat period to the early years of the new Republic, this mission was carried out through the intellectuals of the time, who used newspapers as their main tool for propaganda, where they would publish their articles, short stories or novels as serials. These were the foundations of the new Turkish national identity. As Anderson rightly observes, “the seeds of Turkish nationalism are easily detachable in the appearance of a lively vernacular press in Istanbul,”<sup>255</sup> starting from as early as the 1870s.

When scholars argue that nations were formed through novels and newspapers, they refer most obviously to the content of these texts. Newspapers inform readers of actual events happening to actual persons elsewhere in the nations, and novels entertain readers with the same events in a fictional mode,<sup>256</sup> considering their audiences as persons likely to care about, and debate the events they describe.

---

<sup>253</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, London 2002, p. 9

<sup>254</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, London 2002, p.16

<sup>255</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 75

<sup>256</sup> Baugh, *The Novel of Purpose*, USA 2007, p. 16

Moreover, Anderson observes that the newspaper's juxtaposed events, like the novel's multiple plots, train the readers to keep track of simultaneous events. In this way, the readers learn to acknowledge a connection between their lives and the lives of those unfolding elsewhere in the nation.<sup>257</sup> Novels can provide effective training and contribute to national formation.<sup>258</sup>

Anderson argues that the importance of this transformation for the "imagined community" of the nation can be observed through the basic structure of two forms of imagining: the novel and the newspaper: "For these forms provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation."<sup>259</sup> If, then, newspapers and novels 're-present' and 're-form' nations, it is only logical to study and examine the literature of Turkish transformation and reconstruction of the national identity from this era in order to fully understand what happened and why.

Bhabha remarks that, "If the spirit of the Western nation has been symbolized in epic anthem, then the sign of colonial government is cast in a lower key, caught in the irredeemable act of writing."<sup>260</sup> To be able to study the Turkish writing, however, one needs to consider the fact that Turkey was never a proper colony to the Western powers, yet at the same time, it can be argued that the literature shows distinct signs of post-colonial literature. The revolt against those who came to invade the motherland is heavily present, although the Westernization and the metamorphoses of

---

<sup>257</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 33

<sup>258</sup> Baugh, *The Novel of Purpose*, USA 2007, p. 17

<sup>259</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p. 25

<sup>260</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York 2004, p.133

the nation are not imposed by the Western powers who come to invade. The idea of post-colonial literary theory emerges from the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of post-colonial writing.<sup>261</sup> Indeed, in Turkey's case, it was a self-chosen role hugely supported by the intellectuals in their writings. In this respect, Turkey's literary case is unique and requires a special treatment. The latter both parsed the bravery and success of the War of Independence, which also prevented the country from becoming a colony, while simultaneously encouraged its readership to be more like the West, the very powers that the nation fought against for independence. This placed Turkish literature in a unique position, defying the post-colonial literary theory.

Another trend in the literature is that, while the writing supports the Westernization and modernization of the nation, it is highly cautious of the aftermath and what this rapid transition caused if it is interpreted superficially. Karaosmanoglu in his classic novel *Kiralik Konak* (A Mansion for Rent, 1922) is a grand example of these concerns.

What links Karaosmanoglu and Adivar is the fact that both writers were also activists who took on crucial parts during the years of struggle and the War of Independence. They both had the opportunity to meet and get to know Ataturk, see the changes take place first hand as well as influencing public opinion. They used their eyes and pens to witness history. Karaosmanoglu in particular, devoted many articles, essays and books to record history,<sup>262</sup> where he wrote about Ataturk and the rebirth of the nation.

---

<sup>261</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, New York 2010, p. 11

<sup>262</sup> Books such as *Ataturk*, *Ergenekon* and *Vatan Yolunda*.

In his monograph titled *Ataturk*, Karaosmanoglu analyses his own personal views of Ataturk's struggles to establish a new nation.<sup>263</sup>

Karaosmanoglu was born on May 27, 1889 in Cairo and has been one of the most influential authors in Turkey's history. In his youth, he embraced the idea of "art for art's sake". However, the difficult years of national struggle changed his view, and, like many of his contemporaries, Karaosmanoglu used his pen to display the condition of the nation as well as to instil nationalistic ideas in the public.<sup>264</sup> Karaosmanoglu grew up during the reign of Abdulhamid II (1878-1909). His primary education took place in Manisa and Izmir. He considered himself a "true Anatolian boy".<sup>265</sup> However, it was not until after he had to return to Egypt, following the death of his father, that he met several members of the Young Turks and was influenced by their ideas. In 1908, he came back to Istanbul and began to produce his first pieces of writings which were mainly plays, short stories, poems and essays.<sup>266</sup>

In 1920, Karaosmanoglu began writing novels, leaving the rest of the genres he dabbled in, behind. His literature was heavily influenced by the sociological and political turbulences in the country, starting with the 1908 Second Constitutional Era, the March 31 Incident, the Balkan Wars, World War I and the years of the national struggle.<sup>267</sup> In this regard, *Kiralik Konak* was Karaosmanoglu's first novel and the driving force of the work can be identified as the constitutional era. He was not only

---

<sup>263</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Ataturk*, Istanbul, 2012

<sup>264</sup> Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I*, Istanbul 2008, p. 179

<sup>265</sup> Caglar, "Edebiyatçılarımızla Konuşmalar: Yakup Kadri", *Yucel*, sayı 77, 1935

<sup>266</sup> Aki, *Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu*, Istanbul 2001, p. 30

<sup>267</sup> Aki, *Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu*, Istanbul 2001, p. 96

deeply interested in Western literature, but his literary techniques were also influenced by French authors such as Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant and Zola.<sup>268</sup> Karaosmanoglu believed that art must serve and help society during hard times. This view was shared by many of his contemporaries, hence giving Turkish literature its distinctive educational purpose.

Karaosmanoglu was critical about the imperial era that was collapsing.<sup>269</sup> The novel which is examined in this chapter, *Kiralik Konak*, takes place during the Second Constitutional Era, highlighting the false conceptions of modernization and the degeneration it created in society. Karaosmanoglu tells the story of Naim Efendi and his family of three generations who live in an old mansion in Istanbul.<sup>270</sup> The novel opens up with a striking sentence that sets the tone of the story and alerts the reader to the atmosphere of change that is surrounding the characters:

“Naim Efendi and his family did not move to Kanlica this summer. The times are not the same anymore, in two years a lot of customs have changed.”<sup>271</sup>

The main character, Naim Efendi, experiences the aftermath of the Tanzimat period, and the way his grandchildren live their lives, which eventually becomes “too much” for this old man. Towards the end of the book, Naim Efendi’s sister, Selma Hanım, does not want to leave her brother in this house all by himself and proposes that they

---

<sup>268</sup> Gecgel, Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati, Ankara 2011, p. 281

<sup>269</sup> Enigun, Yeni Turk Edebiyati Arastirmalari, Istanbul 2007, p. 473

<sup>270</sup> Moran, Turk Romanina Elestirel Bir Bakis I, Istanbul 2008, p. 180

<sup>271</sup> Karaosmanoglu, Kiralik Konak, Istanbul 2013, p. 9

rent out the mansion. Naim Efendi, identifying himself with the house, strongly resists the idea, convinced that leaving behind this house where he had lived all his life would certainly kill him. Old, poor and forgotten in his mansion, Naim Efendi encounters his young nephew, Hakki Celis, who states his conclusion about Naim Efendi and the aftermath of the Tanzimat period:

“[...] To him [Hakki Celis], this old man symbolized something, he was a horrible ghost at the break of this new era. Without a doubt, he was the last cry of the time we have left behind and the shudder of the cliff we are facing ahead. He was both the punishment and the one who got punished. He was a punishment towards the generation he left behind and he was punished for the cruel, short future that awaited him. Today, this venomous blood that runs through Naim Efendi’s veins comes from the same poisonous flower Naim Efendi and those like him planted in their own garden. [...] Without a doubt, the same blow that shook the very core of this old Ottoman mansion came from Naim Efendi himself.”<sup>272</sup>

The author does not hide his sympathy for two characters in the book: Hakki Celis and Naim Efendi.<sup>273</sup> This does not, though, prevent the author from blaming Naim Efendi for what has come upon him and others, as Hakki Celis ends up being killed in war while everyone else goes on about their lives.

---

<sup>272</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, pp. 166-167

<sup>273</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 427

Let us also note that the author, does not “kill” Naim Efendi despite his advanced age. Although Naim Efendi falls very ill, the reader only hear about him from other characters, namely his son-in-law, Servet Bey:

“When one of his guests asked him, ‘How is your father-in-law?’  
he laughed quite a lot and replied, ‘Unfortunately, he hasn’t died  
yet. The poor man, even *Azrail*<sup>274</sup> doesn’t want to take him!’”<sup>275</sup>

It can be argued that Karaosmanoglu here refers to the final stages of the Ottoman Empire, filled with losses and failed attempts to get the country back to its glorious days. He does so through the perspective of a younger generation, who seems eager for the Empire to “die” so that they can move forward without the sour memoires of their past.

Upon his return to an occupied Istanbul (1918) Karaosmanoglu was deeply disturbed and upset by the condition the country was in. This fuelled his nationalistic tendencies and the majority of what he penned after was clearly influenced by the ideas of liberation and nationalism. In Inci Enigun’s words Karaosmanoglu defended optimism and trust in the future, being one with the nation, keeping faith in the leader and his entourage, and rediscovering national values.<sup>276</sup> Notwithstanding, Karaosmanoglu usually kept a skeptical undertone, almost as a warning, towards the modernization of the country. While he never seemed to doubt that the country would

---

<sup>274</sup> Trans. The Angel of Death

<sup>275</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, p. 212

<sup>276</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati Arastirmalari*, Istanbul 2007, p. 108



gain back its sovereignty, he seemed to worry about the effect this could have on the Turkish national and cultural identity.

Hakki Celis, for example, is the hero of *Kiralik Konak*, upon whom Karaosmanoglu assigns all these values. First he was a pampered poet, but when the war began Hakki Celis was recruited as a reserve officer and transformed into a real patriot and soldier.<sup>277</sup> He is the grandson of Naim Efendi's sister, Selma Hanim, and the symbol of the new nation in the novel. Two things define him: his love for his second cousin, Naim Efendi's granddaughter Seniha, and his difference in character when compared to others from his generation.

Hakki Celis loves Seniha for a good length of the story, even though Seniha leads a very "questionable" life with her lover, Faik Bey, who is a heavy gambler and drinker. Seniha is portrayed as a young woman who is only concerned with dressing, throwing dinner parties and flirting with wealthy men in the name of living a modern life. Hakki Celis, on the other hand, is an aspiring poet with a fragile spirit.

Towards the end of the book, Hakki Celis develops an overwhelming sense of nationalism and decides to join the army. While visiting Naim Efendi to say farewell, his own manifesto runs through his mind:

"Something in the air is changing. There is a wild wind above our heads. This wind is like a fire coming from the desert, it burns our foreheads. This wind feels like it comes from high and snowy mountains; with each touch it toughens our skin and our bones.

---

<sup>277</sup> Koroglu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, London 2007, p. 150

Sometimes, this wind feels like the sweet breeze of the sea, the cool air at the end of a hot summer's day. Indeed, I am one of those who has joined this journey. Yet I do not know where I am going. I am drunk with this fever and I am not frightened. Because I am a part of a long, deep and endless convoy and even if there is a steep cliff at the end of our road, I shall keep walking because for me, nothing could be worse than going back!"<sup>278</sup>

The contrast between Seniha and Hakki Celis, who happen to belong to the same generation, is greatly apparent in the novel: while Hakki Celis has surrendered himself to the overflow of nationalistic and patriotic emotions and thinks about nothing else but his country, Seniha is entertaining foreign soldiers in her apartment flat. This contrast is even stronger in the last scenes when Hakki Celis goes to his aunt, Seniha's mother, to say goodbye before setting off to Canakkale, a city that is raging with war. Hakki Celis and Seniha spend the night together and upon Seniha's request, they "talk about the old times."<sup>279</sup> The two characters are in Seniha's room for a major last scene of the novel. The room and the two characters alone give the impression that this is the moment when two extremes of the same generation collide.

While watching Seniha undo her hair, Hakki Celis suffers from a mental breakdown and cries for a long time. Seniha narcissistically believes this is about her: "So, you still love me?"<sup>280</sup> This statement marks the end of their relationship when Hakki Celis

---

<sup>278</sup> Karaosmanoglu, Kiralik Konak, Istanbul 2013, p. 168

<sup>279</sup> Karaosmanoglu, Kiralik Konak, Istanbul 2013, p. 201

<sup>280</sup> Karaosmanoglu, Kiralik Konak, Istanbul 2013, p. 205

makes up his mind that he wishes nothing to do with Seniha, nor the kind of people she represents. While she is talking about the misfortunes she had to endure all her life, as a figure of speech, she says: “during these turbulent times that the nation is going through...”, at which point, Hakki Celis interrupts her: “Why are you bringing the nation into this? The poor nation, it is no concern of yours!”<sup>281</sup> The love he once felt for Seniha is now abandoned for the love he feels for his country. Seniha has taken the “degenerated” rout of rapid modernization while Hakki Celis, overwhelmed by nationalistic ideas, is ready in a heartbeat, to sacrifice his life for his country.

Fifteen days after Hakki Celis’ departure, Seniha learns at her father’s dinner party thrown for a rich merchant, that Hakki Celis died in the front. The last sentence of the novel tells about the young woman’s character:

“The merchant looked at Seniha to see the effect this news would have on the young woman. But Seniha was just fancy and beautiful.”<sup>282</sup>

The idea that Hakki Celis willingly sacrifices his life for his country’s future is a poignant theme throughout the literature of this period. While some choose to maintain only the superficial aspects of Westernization, others choose to sacrifice all they can for their nation. For instance, Aliye, in Adivar’s famous novel *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore) and Sahin Efendi in Guntekin’s *Yesil Gece* (The Green Night) are just two of many fictional characters who behaved the same way.

---

<sup>281</sup> Karaosmanoglu, Kiralik Konak, Istanbul 2013, p. 208

<sup>282</sup> Karaosmanoglu, Kiralik Konak, Istanbul 2013, p. 217

In addition to sacrifice, education is also a major theme in Turkish literature. The young generation who wishes to incorporate more than just the superficial aspects of Westernization usually takes it upon themselves to educate those around them. A good example for this would be the novel *Tatarcik* by Adivar. *Tatarcik* was published between 1938-1939, first as a serial in *Yedigun* magazine, then as a book, after Adivar returned to Turkey from her self-imposed exile.<sup>283</sup> The novel can be considered as a continuation of *Sinekli Bakkal* (The Clown and His Daughter, 1935) and *Zeyno'nun Oglu* (Zeyno's Son, 1928) since the reader witnesses the return of some characters and meets their children, now adults. *Tatarcik*, like many novels written during this period, examines the issue of modernization and the social transformation of Turkish society during the first decade of the new Republic.<sup>284</sup>

The title, itself, refers to its protagonist Lale, who is given the nickname "Tatarcik" by the people of the town because her father was a Tatar<sup>285</sup>. Just like Hakki Celis in *Kiralik Konak*, Lale is the wild-card of the story. The novel examines the new type of characters that emerged during the Republican era and specifically concerns itself with the youth establishment.<sup>286</sup> One of the main ideas in Adivar's narrative is that

---

<sup>283</sup> Yilmaz, "Türk Edebiyatında Kadın Öğretmen Tipleri", *SAÜ Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Sayı 14, 2007, p. 243.

<sup>284</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'ın Eserlerine Doğu ve Batı Meselesi, İstanbul 2007, p. 271

<sup>285</sup> Tatars are Turkic people living in Asia and Europe. Any member of several Turkic-speaking peoples that collectively numbered more than 5 million in the late 20th century and lived mainly in west-central Russia along the central course of the Volga River and its tributary, the Kama, and thence east to the Ural Mountains. The Tatars are also settled in Kazakhstan and, to a lesser extent, in western Siberia.

<sup>286</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'ın Eserlerine Doğu ve Batı Meselesi, İstanbul 2007, p. 274

society evolves through changes. She prefers evolution to sudden rupture in story lines and believes that certain types of people will continue to exist: the good getting better and the bad becoming worse.<sup>287</sup> Hence, she makes sure her characters experience a continuation through generations of families spread over multiple novels.

In order to mark this continuation, just like in *Kiralik Konak*, the characters in *Tatarcik* span three generations. The beginning of the story is peculiar from a narrative perspective: the setting and the story-line is declared to be fictional, and Lale is brought up to the reader's attention:

“Hence the place is made-up, and even the hero of the story... Only, this girl called Tatarcik is a person who has embodied the different aspects of her generation, and some of the discrepancies, in her existence.”<sup>288</sup>

This kind of narrative, where the author talks directly to the reader, without hiding themselves, is a common style in Adivar's narrative. After a detailed portrayal of the setting, where the town looks out over the Black Sea (just outside Istanbul), and the people are mostly “simple-minded” and “under-educated”, Adivar then introduces the main character, Lale.

Lale's parents are both average characters, but Adivar makes a point of her father's dignity to a point that the people of the town paradoxically dislike him. After her father's death, who had taught Lale English, she becomes in charge of the household

---

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Adivar, *Tatarcik*, Istanbul 2009, p. 11

by going to mansions of wealthier families to teach English. Adivar draws an early scene, featuring Lale's differences – not just financially but also intellectually – from the children she tutors. Lale subtly makes fun of their conversations and the way they dress. When it becomes fashionable for young girls to tie a fancy ribbon around their necks, one of Lale's students gives her a ribbon as a present. Instead of thanking her student, with a wry smile, Lale says: "I have no desire to look like a Crimean cow with a bell around its neck!"<sup>289</sup>

Another occasion is when Lale is invited to one of her students' dinner parties. These are organized in a Western manner, with young men and women together enjoying music and dancing. The most eligible bachelor of this particular party is a young law doctor named Ozyol, who instead of paying attention to any of the other young women there, gets into a heated, prolonged conversation with Lale about the position of women in his field. This marks the first and last time Lale ever gets invited to a dinner party.<sup>290</sup>

One of the most striking chapters of the novel is *Tatarcik'in Bisikleti* (Tatarcik's Bicycle).<sup>291</sup> Lale keeps going to respectable schools, always finishing at the top of her class. Finally, she gets appointed as an English teacher at the high school from which she graduated. This provides her with the financial opportunity to restore her house and buy better quality clothes, including a hat. The hat itself is one of the signature reforms of Atatürk, and in this case, used by Adivar as a significant metaphor for the

---

<sup>289</sup> Adivar, *Tatarcik*, Istanbul 2009, p. 30

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Adivar, *Tatarcik*, Istanbul 2009, pp. 31-46

purposes of illustrating how young women can adapt to Westernization. Lale is an educated woman, able to wear a hat and join the workforce independently.

Another poignant symbol of Lale's such prosperity that emphasizes Westernization is the bicycle she owns and rides around the town. Lale's interaction with the people from the town after buying a bicycle is a good opportunity to understand how such symbolism functions. In fact, Lale chooses to ride her bicycle in the town centre, full of pedestrians. Soon, an incident occurs. Adivar explains this as "the first collision"<sup>292</sup> with Kor Ismail, who is a retrogressive man and a regular at the town's café. It is noteworthy that the author chooses a man with the nickname "Kor" (blind) as the first person to "collide" with Lale. While Kor Ismail is walking, he hears honks from behind but does not budge. When he realizes that it is Tatarcik who is behind him, an interesting dialogue unfolds:

“ - Why do you keep honking behind me kid? Lots of space on each side, go through!

- I will teach you how to walk on the pedestrian sidewalk, Ismal Aga<sup>293</sup>!

- Did you confuse this with the Divanyolu <sup>294</sup> ? What pedestrian sidewalk?

- The sides of the road belong to the pedestrians, whether there are sidewalks or not; the center of the road is for cars and bicycles.

---

<sup>292</sup> *Trans.* Blind Ismail

<sup>293</sup> *Trans.* Brother Ismail

<sup>294</sup> Divanyolu is the large road that was used for ceremonies or by government officials. It was built by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great and became the main road in Istanbul thereafter.

- Listen to you! You should become a police officer at the roundabouts.

They teach people how to walk there, ordering them where to pass and how to cross!

- There are enough police officers there. The public there knows how to and where to walk. I will teach here to those who do not know... Why did you think I went to university and had an education?”

- I was just thinking that myself!

- To rejuvenate old minds like yours, to civilize you...”<sup>295</sup>

When Ismail makes it to the town’s café that night, he tells the regulars the story. The crowd here does not perceive this as a simple, “unfortunate” incident but considers it as a danger, threatening their daily lives and traditions.<sup>296</sup>

“To these old fools, who are already nearing the end of their lives, the idea of modernization and reforms sounded like a fairy-tale for a long time. Now they were beginning to realize that it was in fact the reality and observed this from their grandchildren who go to schools, and heard it in their heated arguments.”<sup>297</sup>

In this story, like in Karaosmanoglu’s *Kiralik Konak*, Adivar is also showing the gap between generations, caused by rapid modernization and the reforms that led to it. On the one hand, there is an older generation who are afraid of losing their traditions and

---

<sup>295</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 44

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.



customs; while on the other, there is a younger generation who grew up with modern education and ideas of modernization and Westernization.

The “clash” between generations is common in Adivar’s narrative: Aliye, the heroine from *Vurun Kahpeye*<sup>298</sup> (Strike the Whore), is a teacher in a small, old-minded Anatolian village, who wishes to educate the youth and bring civilization to the village. In this tragic story, the villagers are so scared of this change that in the end, they beat Aliye to death.<sup>299</sup> It is also important to point out that Adivar usually creates female characters as the educators and fighters for “civilizing” and “modernizing” the public.

### **The Conflict of East and West in Context of Re-constructing the Turkish National Identity**

The year 1923 marked a new chapter in Turkey’s history. The establishment of the new Republic, followed by the abolition of the sultanate and the caliphate, meant that an old Islamic Empire had to evolve into a secular Republic. Following these changes, it is only natural to expect a conflict between the old and the new, or as Adivar puts it, a conflict between East and West. The new Republic of Turkey was indeed a continuation of the Ottoman Empire in the sense that the people and the land were still the same.<sup>300</sup> However, everything else related to a national or a cultural identity,

---

<sup>298</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012

<sup>299</sup> It is important to point out here that Aliye fights with those possessed of a backwards, Islamic mentality and who are trying to manipulate the masses using religion. Her focus is mainly the children rather than the older generation.

<sup>300</sup> Ortayli, *Cumhuriyetin İlk Yuzyili 1923-2023*, Istanbul 2012, p. 79

such as traditions, language, clothing and historical narrative changed, resulting in a conflict between the old and the new. This conflict was reflected in the literature of this time period. In fact, turbulent times gave the literary scene a lot of material to work with.

One of the most poignant novels with the theme of conflict between the old and the new is Karaosmanoglu's *Kiralik Konak*. In order to understand the multi-layered structure of the novel, the characters and the plot must be dissected. Just like each generation representing transformation, decay and evolution, the characters of the same generation demonstrate different ways in the aftermath of the Westernization process affecting different social groups.

In total, the reader encounters twenty-six characters throughout the story but the three groups of characters, who belong to three different generations, are the main group the author uses to demonstrate the growing gaps between generations due to the rapid social changes.<sup>301</sup> The first generation is portrayed mainly by Naim Efendi and his sister Selma Hanim; the second generation by Naim Efendi's daughter Sekine Hanim and his son-in-law, Servet Bey; and the third generation is represented by Naim Efendi's grandson, Cemil, and granddaughter Seniha. The third generation is supported by an additional character, the "wild card"<sup>302</sup> of the novel, Hakki Celis. These represent certain groups in society, and the person who carries a judgmental view on them is the self-aware Hakki Celis.<sup>303</sup>

---

<sup>301</sup> Uludag, *Uc Devrin Yol Ayriminda: Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu*, Istanbul 2005, pp. 22

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

Karaosmanoglu mainly focuses on decay and descent in his writings, and *Kiralik Konak* is not an exception.<sup>304</sup> Naim Efendi is the eldest of the mansion and throughout the novel, Karaosmanoglu draws a parallel between the old, decaying, Ottoman-style mansion and this old man who finds refuge in a small room, patiently waiting to die. The mansion is a metaphor for the family who lives in it, and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>305</sup> After his wife's death, Naim Efendi, loses control of the mansion, and is no longer in charge.

When describing Naim Efendi's character traits, Karaosmanoglu uses the word "old":

"There are still people like these among us who are a reminder of the past. Even in the old times, these were identified as old men. Its as if their souls have halted in a certain stage. As a matter of fact, everything that makes him laugh or cry, all his memories, his pleasures and his attachments belong to 40 years of past. If anyone were to look at him carefully or listen to him speak, they would've thought Naim Efendi was just opening his eyes from a half of century sleep and looking around with awe."<sup>306</sup>

The change in the spoken language is also used as a way to underline how old and outdated this character is. One of the main features of modernization was the change in the language. In post-colonial literature, language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which

---

<sup>304</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 427

<sup>305</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 427

<sup>306</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, p. 11

conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’ and ‘reality’ becomes established<sup>307</sup>. In the case of Turkish language, this change was imposed by the younger generation upon the older one, therefore the ~~se~~ concepts of truth, order and reality suddenly had different meanings for different generations. Naim Efendi could no longer understand the Turkish that was being written or spoken. In a scene with his son-in-law, the reader sees how, in the person of Naim Efendi, this affects the older generation:

“For a significant amount of time he held the book in his hands,  
then put on his glasses and inspected the cover for a long time. He  
read the author’s name, the publisher and when it was published...  
Every letter he saw on this book, everything he read on it,  
including the author’s name, seemed alien to him. With great  
curiosity he opened the cover but it was absolutely impossible to  
read.”<sup>308</sup>

The biggest struggle in Naim Efendi’s life is when he has to deal with “heart” matters through his granddaughter, Seniha. The relationship between men and women shows the striking gap between generations. The different values carried by three different generations are the main tension point in the novel, as there is almost no common ground between generations in question, and how they perceive Westernization.<sup>309</sup> Their perceptions of extra-marital relationships, drinking and gambling, the individual

---

<sup>307</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, New York 2010, p. 9

<sup>308</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, p. 12

<sup>309</sup> Hayber, Halide Edip, *Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri’nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismalari*, Istanbul 1993, p. 171

and societal effects of modernization, and western ways of socializing remain issues of conflict.

Seniha's marriage is an important example in the battle between the old and the new. In particular, her long-term love affair with Faik Bey, who is very fond of drinking and gambling is a topic of dispute between generations. After a period of depression, doctors suggest that marriage and eventually motherhood would be a remedy for Seniha. Despite Naim Efendi's efforts to marry her traditionally, Seniha refuses to go through with an arranged marriage.<sup>310</sup> But Naim Efendi has no faith in modern customs of matrimony, where bride and groom can date before getting. According to him, this flamboyant behaviour is 'unnatural'.<sup>311</sup>

The issue of courtship being a major point of tension between different generations is present in other novels, too, such as Guntekin's *Yaprak Dokumu* (The Fall of Leaves) and Adivar's *Seviye Talip* and *Handan*. The idea is that Westernization has encouraged women and men to socialize together in a "Western" manner. For instance, following the adoption of the Swiss Civil Law in 1926<sup>312</sup> women and men became equals in marriage. These changes created a gap between different generations about how courtship and marriage should be handled. According to Serif Mardin, it was especially with the upper classes that the newfound freedom of the Turkish woman could be traced in the literature back to *Kiralik Konak*'s Seniha.<sup>313</sup>

---

<sup>310</sup> *trans.* Arranged marriage

<sup>311</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, p. 42

<sup>312</sup> Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Kulturel, Ekonomik Temeller*, Istanbul 2013, p. 140

<sup>313</sup> Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi*, Istanbul 2015, p. 42

Indeed, Seniha might not have been portrayed as an ideal role model; however, it can not be denied that she has the freedom to act upon her own will.

The clash of the old and new between generations is an ongoing theme throughout the novel, at the end of which, Naim Efendi's son-in-law grows restless and tells his wife to move from the "old, wrecked mansion with primitive conditions into one of those extraordinary modern apartments"<sup>314</sup> in Sisli, a relatively modern part of Istanbul. This becomes reality and Naim Efendi is, indeed, left alone in his old mansion.

The "aim to civilize" and the "misinterpretation of civilizing" are two other related major themes of Turkish literature from this period. Highly dominant in Adivar's narrative, it means a conflict between East and West.

In a series of lectures at the Jamia Millia Islamia in 1935, Adivar extensively discusses the conflict of East and West in Turkey, and to answer her own question: "What is East and what is West?"<sup>315</sup> she relies on the negative and positive attributes of both Eastern and Western identities. Adivar acknowledges that Eastern nations such as Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia had a profound influence on later civilizations in the same area. She explains that the rulers of the old East were so holy that they hid from the view of the millions they ruled. The terms individual and nation had little significance.<sup>316</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, p. 141

<sup>315</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 1

<sup>316</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 2-3

She suggests that these conditions created a unique identity for the Eastern individual:

“The individual of the East is the possessor of a marked and unique personality. More so than the individual of the West. How has he managed it? Simply by detaching his mind from material and worldly relations. [...] The State is in the nature of Fate to him. He can never alter it. Hence very few or no attempts to rise and demand a voice in the workings and will of the State and Ruler. This sort of mind naturally turns to itself, to its soul. The body of such a man is not his own, the good things of the earth are not for him. Hence the spiritual values are the only values. It is no mere coincidence that the East, in which ninety-nine per cent are the owners of this sort of a mind, has been the cradle of all living religions.”<sup>317</sup>

She further argues that good behavior, ensuring peace and avoiding uncertainty are also a big part of the Eastern identity and “anything which is a departure from tradition is hateful,”<sup>318</sup> to the Eastern mind-set. But drawbacks exist, too:

“There is no doubt that the spiritual values are more worthwhile and more satisfying. But is this judgment entirely and wholly right? It would be, if men were merely disembodied spirits. Man being a combination of matter and spirit, this sole emphasis on the spirit has produced disastrous results in the long run. The utter discard of material values has made of man a subject for exploitation, first by his own rulers, later by the more materialist West. The East seems to have existed only for the sake of

---

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, pp. 4-5

providing cheaper labour, riches and markets to the world. Such being the case, we must admit that all is not right in the East. Reduced to its simplest expression, the supreme ill of which the East is suffering is due to a lack of proportion between the material and the spiritual nature of man.”<sup>319</sup>

Moving on to the West, Adivar claims that, “Both the men and the civilization of the West are late arrivals.”<sup>320</sup>

For Adivar, the religion of West was originated in the East; philosophy and science came from ancient Greece, and the ideals of government from Rome. Rome was the first expression of Western civilization:

“Their first great innovation was their conception of law. In the East the law was God-made or made by the ruler. In Rome it was man-made; further, made by the consent of the governed.”<sup>321</sup>

According to Adivar, Christianity as a religion was expected to moderate and spiritualize the excessive materialism which the West inherited from pagan Rome. Although it did spiritualize and unify the West under one name. Christianity was then fundamentally altered in the West. For Adivar, the West completely ignored the basic

---

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.



principle of Christianity, peace: “The Christian world went out of its way to strike every peaceful face under the sun.”<sup>322</sup>

According to Adivar, the West’s emphasis on materialism all the same produced a host of scientific miracles that came at a cost: “One-sided and purely material progress has given the West an unlimited power over the rest of the world.”<sup>323</sup> Adivar argues that the Western mind believed that the essence of life lies in the material nature of man and she asks if this notion could be correct:

“It would be, if man were dehumanized, or rather de-souled; if like some super animal he had nothing but bodily appetites and needs. Man being a combination of matter and spirit, the sole emphasis laid on matter has produced disastrous results in the long run. [...] Like the East of old, the West is also suffering from a mortal disease. Reduced to its simplest expression, the supreme ill of which the West’s suffering is also due to a lack of proportion between the material and the spiritual nature of man.”<sup>324</sup>

For Adivar, the spiritual aspects of the East and the materialistic ambitions of the West were both valuable, but they had to be in balance. Human beings were a combination of a soul and a body, therefore an identity should satisfy both dimensions, or it would be disastrous. As a firm supporter of Ziya Gokalp’s ideology, Adivar writes: “We come from the East, we face the West” A balanced identity, both

---

<sup>322</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 6.

<sup>323</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, pp. 7-8.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

national and individual, would have to be a good combination of both spiritual (Eastern) and material (Western) ideologies.

Clearly visible in Adivar's literature, the characters represent sharp distinctions in terms of an Eastern traditional mindset, and a more modern Western mindset.

Characters with an Eastern mindset appear to be in the way of change but are reluctant to evolve into a more inclusive identity. Sometimes they are portrayed as vicious, ready to protect the status quo. An excellent example of this is the Imam character in *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore), who brutally murders Aliye, whose Western ideals and education symbolize change in the spiritual depth of the East.

In *Tatarcik*, we see the older generation in the person of village folk not as violent, yet absolutely reluctant towards changing their traditions and ways. Similar to Aliye in *Vurun Kahpeye*, Lale is also a woman of strong moral values, who is both skilfully spiritual and materialistic.

Adivar is very explicit about the way she believes the new Turkish national identity should be constructed, proposing harmony between what she sees as Eastern spirituality and Western thought. The "good" characters, designed to exemplify this new identity (who are mostly women) are usually without faults: Aliye and Lale are determined, intelligent women, who rarely compromise on their values or ideals. Whereas the morally depraved characters are horrifically monstrous. Imam is an example of the Eastern mindset. Religiously conservative, he has no other side to him; he is simply bad and evil. Bay Balta's character in *Tatarcik*, on the other hand, is comically heinous, a type that appears in many novels from the late-Ottoman and

early-Republican era. In sum, he is a newly rich man who likes to gloat, and unlike the moral characters, he is only capable of adopting the superficial aspects of Westernization.

A well-constructed scene in *Tatarcik* displays the tension between good and bad characters when Bay Balta harasses his assistant. On the grounds of a friend's advice that "a millionaire without a mistress cannot be considered modern,"<sup>325</sup> Bay Balta makes an ill-advised attempt to kiss on his assistant's neck. The assistant, who is a young and educated woman coldly reacts:

"Sir... This is an era of professionalism. And my profession is being a typist. This is the only thing we have in our contract. If you are looking for a professional who will deliver you the service you are seeking, you can look for them within the circle of unemployed ladies in high-society or the places in Beyoglu who are exclusively offering these services."<sup>326</sup>

The aforementioned example clearly depicts the tension between a newly-rich business man, who is possessive and has misinterpreted modernization and a new generation of women, who believe they have a separate place in society and are against compromising on their Eastern values while accommodating Western thought. The conflict in constructing a new national and cultural identity has not been easy for Turkish women, whose societal roles have radically changed:

"Two important measures have been passed in regards to women in society under the Republican regime. A new civil code has been

---

<sup>325</sup> Adivar, *Tatarcik*, Istanbul 2009, p. 42

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

promulgated which abolishes polygamy, equalizes inheritance and entrusts the right to divorce to a court. Secondly, women have been given the municipal vote and are eligible to stand for elections in councils.”<sup>327</sup>

After the kissing incident, Bay Balta decides to hire Lale as his new secretary, not only because Lale is fluent in English, but he thinks he can trick her into becoming his mistress. When Bay Balta acts on his intentions, Lale puts him in his place publicly.

While Lale is waiting for her American friend to arrive at the docks of Poyraz Koy, Bay Balta’s big yacht comes by and Bay Balta, himself, invites her in to discuss an important matter. Lale declines. On Bay Balta’s insistence, Lale decides to teach him a lesson of “civilized” behavior: “The ferry is waiting to come ashore and you sir, are violating the rights of these people. This is a democratic country!”<sup>328</sup> At this stage in the story, one of Bay Balta’s other assistants says Lale is right. And Bay Balta, desperate not to appear “uncivilised” goes on to say: “Long live the womanhood who gave us a lesson in democracy!” because he does not want to appear uncivilized and the crowd cheers.<sup>329</sup>

Another good example of the younger generation’s aim to civilize the older generation is illustrated in the following quote by Adivar:

---

<sup>327</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 223

<sup>328</sup> Adivar, *Tatarcik*, Istanbul 2009), p. 74

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

“Nowadays, even the poorest towns have radios. Even in the poorest towns, the youth are dancing until the old wooden houses collapse. Object if you can! ‘Dear father, we will civilise you with this radio,’ shout back the grandchildren to their faces. The elderly now fear the phrase ‘we will civilize you’ like they fear death. When they hear Tatarcik say the words, “I’ll civilize you!” they all get terrified. After all, evil ideas like these that disturb tradition are contagious. What if other youngsters start to follow in her footsteps?”<sup>330</sup>

When one of them suggests that it wouldn’t be the end of the world if they start using the side of the road the others are quick to get angry. They argue, “This girl tries to teach us where to walk today, who’s to say she won’t try to get inside our homes and reorganize everything tomorrow? And who is she, a child, to teach us grown men about manners? No, no, we will all walk right in the middle of the road.”<sup>331</sup> Only, at the end of the argument, Kor Ismail thinks to himself, “Just in case, I’ll just stop using that road all together! I can’t deal with these young bastards!”<sup>332</sup>

It is important to remember that Adivar’s contribution to Turkish literature is vast and unique. She is almost the single female voice of her time. Having experienced polygamy and divorce and been active in politics, Adivar has, herself, witnessed many of the social changes women experienced. *Tatarcik*’s Lale and her profound

---

<sup>330</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, pp. 44-45

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 46.

attachment with her family, traditions as well as determination to educate and civilize those around clearly represent the author's own ideals.

Chronologically, Adivar's literature can be divided into three categories: the literature produced before, during and after the National Struggle. According to Inci Enigun, during the National Struggle, Adivar writes based on her own observations.<sup>333</sup> After the National Struggle, Adivar seems to be more concerned with the effects of it on the Turkish people. Once again, *Tatarcik*, written in 1939, is a good example of such concerns.

### **The Irretrievable Generation Gap**

Social changes are lived and experienced differently by different generations, creating a considerable gap between them.<sup>334</sup> This gap is an indicator of how younger generations adapt to change and how older ones resist it. This issue was of major concern to many authors during the Westernization period. Adivar examined the generation gap through Westernization and concluded that generations should hold on to their values and traditions while also "westernising." Whereas Karaosmanoglu examined how different generations reacted towards the process of Westernization.

*Kiralik Konak* opens up with a chapter devoted entirely to stressing the tension between three generations echoing the Tanzimat period's conflicting views between old and new, traditionalism and modernism. Naim Efendi is as a man from the old

---

<sup>333</sup> Enigun, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, pp. 283- 275

<sup>334</sup> Hayber, Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismalari, Istanbul 1993, p. 380

times, having difficulties understanding the *alafranga*<sup>335</sup> behaviors of his son-in-law Servet Bey and his grandchildren, Cemil and Seniha.

“In order to get angry or offended, one first needs to understand.

But Naim Efendi couldn’t understand the way his son-in-law or his grandchildren lived. Alafranga, the way of the times... These words did not explain the situation inside the mansion enough for Naim Efendi to understand.”<sup>336</sup>

Through his creation of intergenerational characters in *Kiralik Konak*, Karaosmanoglu projects the cracks that eventually lead to a collapse in society caused by differences in opinion, world views and perceptions as a result of Western influence.<sup>337</sup> This, then, provokes a degeneration of society because Westernization is wrongly interpreted with the sole adoption of its superficial aspects of modern life and not its advances in education and technology. The second and third generation of characters in Karaosmanoglu’s mansion are examples of such superficiality: according to Naim Efendi, Seniha is eighteen but acts like an eight year old child; Cemil is twenty yet lives a corrupt life with his love of drinking and “promiscuous” women, and Servet Bey is obsessed with Europe with his suitcase always ready by the door for a departure for a visit to the continent. Servet Bey hates Muslims and “Turkishness,” for he considers them as symbols of retrogradation.<sup>338</sup>

---

<sup>335</sup> An Ottoman word used for describing behaviors of European manner or someone who has adopted European ways. The opposite is *alaturca*.

<sup>336</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, p. 18.

<sup>337</sup> Hayber, Halide Edip, *Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri’nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismalari*, Istanbul 1993, p. 169

<sup>338</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, pp. 14-18

When it comes to the *alaturca*, the second and third generations show little to no mercy. The chapter ends with a vivid image to demonstrate the Tanzimat generation's perspective towards the Ottoman legacy. While discussing the difficult situation of an old friend who worked at the government's office and who is now being accused of corruption and bribery, Naim Efendi says that the newspapers are doing wrong to denigrate his friend's name like that. To this, his son-in-law backlashes:

“Sir! There are courts of justice in this country. Hasip Pasha could go to the courts, surrender himself to justice and if he is innocent, very well... However, if he is not... Guillotine my good sir, only guillotine will clean this mess up... Not only the corrupt, but all the out-dated, old-minded should be beheaded as well!”<sup>339</sup>

In Adivar's *Tatarcik*, Feridun Pasa Mansion is one of the major settings in which the majority of the characters resides during the story. It is a large mansion, covering an entire hillside of the town overlooking the shore. Much like the old mansion of *Kiralik Konak* (A Mansion for Rent), three generations of a family live here. However, unlike the old mansion portrayed by Karaosmanoglu, this one is a lively house and well maintained. The mansion itself, a large grove that surrounds the mansion, and the residents themselves are “a source of pride for the town.”<sup>340</sup>

The oldest generation is represented by Feridun Pasha, or Pasha Baba, as his family and friends call him. He is a “walking antique piece,” and even though he is said to be

---

<sup>339</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, p. 19

<sup>340</sup> Adivar, *Tatarcik*, Istanbul 2009, p. 47



somewhere between eighty to one hundred years old (the reader does not know his exact age) he did not lose physical strength or liveliness.”<sup>341</sup> He suffers from dementia, but the foggiest of his mind does not stop him from reciting old military stories to his grandchildren, who live in the same mansion. His stories might get mixed up; however, the older generation still likes to hear them.

Feridun Baba was a good soldier and spent some quality time in Paris. He had eight sons, who pursued military careers and died in combat. His remaining three daughters all married soldiers. As for the third generation, no one turned out to be interested in a military career.<sup>342</sup> This is to suggest that the third generation grew up in a different atmosphere, where the military and the national struggle were mainly lived through the older generation’s stories.

In Feridun Pasha’s character, two important aspects of the oldest generation are emphasized: their religious identity and approach to women. The first one especially becomes apparent when we compare him to his son-in-law Miralay Nihat, the husband of his oldest daughter Saide, who is also a military man, but unlike Feridun Pasha, a militant atheist:

“Being without religion was his religion. According to him, being an atheist is so comprehensive, so inclusive of great human values, that only those who are without religion can possibly rely on their intellect and therefore can be proper human beings.”<sup>343</sup>

---

<sup>341</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 48

<sup>342</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 49

<sup>343</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 55

Adivar writes that the generation of Nihat's father-in-law never liked him, and gave him names such as "atheist" and "wanna-be-European"<sup>344</sup>. From the author's tone, the reader can sense that Adivar is also not in favour of Nihat's approach. Nihat is a man who only believes in science, philosophy and technology and who disputes any notion that there can be a reconciliation between reason and faith.

Adivar clearly portrays Nihat as a model for what she calls a "Western mind" while Feridun Pasha is an example of the "Eastern" identity, deeply traditional and religious. Therefore, Nihat and Feridun Pasha cannot get along in the novel, and, moreover, Adivar writes that Nihat "somehow couldn't manage to get himself liked by the younger generation either."<sup>345</sup> This is probably because "yedililer" (the Sevens) as portrayed by Adivar as representatives of different social groups of the new Republican youth, are trying to bring Eastern and Western identities together.

In addition, *Tatarcik* is a novel that takes character profiles as its base. The plot is not full of pivotal scenes, or historical moments, but rather the author tends to tell the reader about her characters and seldom puts them in scenes to make her point.

In some of the novels that are more concerned with the plot, such as *Atesten Gomlek* (A Shirt of Fire) and *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore), both written in 1922 during the struggle, Adivar tells the story of the Independence War. *Tatarcik*, on the other hand, written in 1939, is a novel more concerned with the aftermath of the

---

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

Independence War and how the revolution affected the younger generation. In this sense, it would be appropriate to examine each of ‘the Sevens’ along with Lale.

Unlike Lale, who appears as the ideal example of the youth, each character of the Sevens has their strong points and weaknesses. The seven young men gather that summer at the large garden of the Feridun Pasha Mansion for camping; not just for the fresh air and exercise, but also to “have serious talks, to make some decisions regarding their future.”<sup>346</sup>

The first two of the Sevens that the reader meets are Hasim and Salim. Hasim embodies the third generation of the Feridun Pasha mansion and is the host of the camping adventure. Salim, after finishing the famous high school Galatasaray, like many of the Sevens, went to Paris to study philosophy and literature. He obtained a doctorate, with the title “The psychological effects of the reforms”.<sup>347</sup> He is a highly spiritual person and for him the reforms come from a place of faith and he believes all these developments have to be viewed from such a perspective. Miralay Nihat, who disagrees with him on this, seems quite “pleased” with the fact that Salim cannot find a job in academia upon his return to Istanbul. To Miralay Nihat, Salim is, “a dangerous creature,”<sup>348</sup> because he believes that any idea that did not originate from rational thought was “rotten”<sup>349</sup> and this is the reason why, despite his impressive educational background, he cannot find a job in academia, no matter how much he lowers his standards.

---

<sup>346</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 70

<sup>347</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 61

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

In a conversation with Hasim and Recep, Salim expresses his deep anger and frustration regarding Lale, “the type of woman who puts a banana peel at men’s feet.”<sup>350</sup>

“She is a dangerous type. The type of woman who tries to feminize the country,” said Salim.

“I disagree, I think she is more masculine than feminine,” protested Hasim.

“That’s why she is harmful. Because of them, the young people can’t find jobs. Wherever we go they tell us “No vacancies!” and why? Because a young lady with painted nails has claimed the seat before us!”<sup>351</sup>

The next two characters are Sinasi and Safa; both of whose fathers are extremely religious. Sinasi’s family, especially his father, is portrayed as proud to “implement modern ways without compromising the traditions.”<sup>352</sup> His family preserved their traditions and ways of life while modernizing their appearances. His father changed his turban, shaved his long beard and adopted Western clothes. The children were educated in England but all of them continue their daily prayers, five times a day. “Especially the oldest son did his morning prayers on the previous day’s Times newspaper while he lived in London.”<sup>353</sup> Every Ramadan they would fast, “or appear

---

<sup>350</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 98

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 86

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

that way” and listen to Koran readings on the radio but they also send postcards with family photos to their family and friends every New Year. During Christmas time they would decorate a tree and the younger generation would dance until the morning.

As for Sinasi, he is highly influenced by this environment, therefore “he is not religious himself but he doesn’t oppose those who are”.<sup>354</sup> All Sinasi wants is a good job where he can dress nicely, eat well in good company, play card games and spend his days and nights with nice women.<sup>355</sup> The reader gets the impression that Sinasi, unlike Lale and some of his friends, does not wish to occupy his mind with the deep, troubling issues of the new nation, he just wants to take advantage of the new modern ways to have a life of comfort and pleasure.

Safa, on the other hand, believes an absolute denial of religion is the definition of civilization. His father, a *muezzin*,<sup>356</sup> makes sure his family, especially his only son, grows up according to religious traditions, and so Safa spends his youth within the confines of religion. As soon as he is old enough to appreciate his situation, “he rebelled against his father and all that his father represented.”<sup>357</sup> This rebellion causes him to be “aggressive”. He first becomes a passionate atheist and over time, a communist: “There were two reasons as to why he was a communist: the first one was that he believed communists were anti-religious and the second was that communists

---

<sup>354</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 87

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> *trans.* The person responsible for calling Muslims to mosque for praying.

<sup>357</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 90

wanted to form a new society through violence, even with bullets and blood if necessary.”<sup>358</sup>

Ahmet is the character that believes money is the key to a modern “civilized” life. His father owns a small grocery store and as a child Ahmet would make his father branch out and sell school stationary to his classmates. He believes that only money can bring power and only rich countries could be “civilized”. He is very cautious about dressing well, socializing with the rich, learning about the rich classes in America and trying to their lifestyle as much as he can.<sup>359</sup>

Recep, the oldest of the Sevens, is the only one who “appeared to be aimless, as if he didn’t have any expectations from this world.”<sup>360</sup> Hasan<sup>361</sup>, the youngest of them all, is the one that is the ideal character. He combines all the good features; the Sevens feel this too, and they are quite protective of him. Hasan is, “very capable, usually doing something for one of his friends without them having to ask.”<sup>362</sup> His father is a brave soldier who lost his arm during the war, and his mother is a Kurdish woman named Zeyno. In addition to his great character, he is also very smart, studying medicine at university.<sup>363</sup>

---

<sup>358</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, pp. 91-92.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 97

<sup>361</sup> Hasan is the “Haso Kid” from Adivar’s novel *Zeyno ’nun Oglu* (Zeyno’s Son).

<sup>362</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, pp. 101-102

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

Along with these men, the reader is introduced to two main female characters: Lale, also known as Tatarcik, and Zehra. They are almost complete opposites. Lale is very serious and level-headed and she does not like to overdress or pamper herself. She is a teacher who is concerned with educating and civilizing those around her. When her American friend Helen asks Lale whether she likes to flirt with boys, Lale replies,

“We don’t have the time. The main duty of the youth today is to make sure the foundations of the new society are strong and fight the old mentality and traditions.”<sup>364</sup>

When Helen asks about Zehra, Lale’s answers:

“The only thing that she concerns herself with is to pose... And those young men, I’m sure they love still women for their appearance and they see those women who join the workforce as their enemies.”<sup>365</sup>

The chapter entitled *Three Girls, Seven Boys*<sup>366</sup> describes a meeting that takes place at the mansion’s garden involving Zehra, Lale, Helen and the Sevens. While this chapter dissects Zehra’s character and thinking, it is also a good opportunity for the reader to compare the two female lead characters and how much they differ. Zehra constantly evaluates the Sevens in terms of whether they would make good husbands or not. However, Lale is there to talk to Milanay Nihat about business. He wants an English tutor and finds Lale very smart and level-headed. Zehra resents the mere fact that Lale is there. She is uncomfortable with the way Lale makes her feel:

---

<sup>364</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, pp. 78

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, pp. 104-125

“Zehra gets uncomfortable whenever she senses Lale’s judgment of her. Lale thinks, ‘Poor spinster. In order to find a husband, this poor girl is ready to do every pettiness! A sort of female that would do every con in order to get a man.’”<sup>367</sup>

After the first half of the book, in which Halide Edib mainly focuses on character development, the second half is composed of various scenes in the mansion and its garden, during which the novel’s characters interact with each other in order to highlight their differences and similarities.

One of these scenes involves Recep and Safa having an argument regarding religion and society. Safa states:

- “- Would an intelligent man believe in such a thing as religion?
- Every sane man has a crazy side, just like every crazy man has a sane side, replied Recep.
- Is this again from English literature, Recep?
- No, I came up with it myself but you didn’t let me finish!
- I know what you will say; you’re going to talk about the soul and literature again.
- Those do not exist for me. The only thing in this universe is the human intellect. The rest is just matter. Even intellect is the collectivity of some matters.
- Then would you mind telling us what actually is “matter” Safa? Salim jumped in the conversation.

---

<sup>367</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 122



- Don't make me laugh Salim. Haven't you taken any physics classes?
- I guess the definition of the matter in physics that you have studied is no longer valid today.
- I don't care about definitions. I cannot go backwards during these modern days.
- And I can't chain my mind to these new "modern ways", declared Recep."<sup>368</sup>

Recep finishes the argument with these words:

"The ideology of your cause is void Safa. All you have is rage, a rage towards your father... He was an old-fashioned religious fanatic with rage and you are a modern irreligious-fanatic with rage. In the world you imagine, the only important thing is your huge ego. I would prefer an untamed African tribe to the world you hope to create."<sup>369</sup>

Among the Sevens, there is slightly more emphasis on Recep. The latter is the son of Rabia and Osman, two of the main characters of Halide Edib's renowned novel *Sinekli Bakkal* (The Clown and His Daughter)<sup>370</sup>, which means that he is the synthesis of East and West.<sup>371</sup> He is conservative in nature but his knowledge on the West is vast. He completed his education at Cambridge and has the soul of an artist: he excels in mimicry, singing and playing the *saz*, a Turkish instrument similar to the guitar.

---

<sup>368</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, pp. 205-206

<sup>369</sup> Adivar, Tatarcik, Istanbul 2009, p. 207

<sup>370</sup> Adivar, Sinekli Bakkal, Istanbul 2006

<sup>371</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerine Dogu ve Bati Meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 275

Adivar chooses this novel, *Tatarcik*, to show that there is an ideal Turkish character that can come into being.<sup>372</sup> Recep shed some of the negative ways and characteristics of his family: he does not yell or ever get aggressive; he values ideas, yet, for him, emotions carry even greater value. Recep is “Eastern,” in the sense that his emotions are strong and alive. However, they are under the control of his mind which makes him the perfect synthesis of East and West.

In the end, Recep and Lale get engaged. In many respects, this is Adivar’s way of getting two of her role model characters together and signalling to the reader what to aspire to. When Recep asks Lale for her hand, he says that once he becomes a lawyer, he will defend those who cannot afford one. He also adds:

“While you work hard to modernize and civilize them, slowly turning them into Sungur Balta and those around him, I will teach them where they have come from, their roots, their identities and what it means to live.”<sup>373</sup>

It could be argued that there are some distinctive similarities between Karaosmanoglu’s *Kiralik Konak* and Halide Edib’s *Tatarcik*. The first, perhaps most obvious, similarity is the setting which are both large, wooden, Ottoman-style mansions. These two stories do not take place in the more modern apartment flats that have come to symbolize modernization and Westernization in Istanbul. However, the mansion in *Kiralik Konak* is falling apart while the mansion in Adivar’s story is in

---

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Adivar, *Tatarcik*, Istanbul 2009, p. 249

relatively better shape. This setting comes to represent the change from empire to nation-state.

Another similarity is the people who accommodate these mansions. In both novels, the story revolves around families of three generations living in the same mansion at the same time, or at least for a period of time. This creates a good environment to study the differences and the generation gap occurring due to rapid modernization between three generations. The similarities between similar generations in both novels are also uncanny. The third and the oldest generation is old and rusty, set in their Ottoman mentality. While Naim Efendi of the *Kiralik Konak* is old, unhealthy and forgotten in his old mansion, he is able to comprehend the degeneration of his family. On the other hand, Pasha Baba of the Feridun Pasha mansion suffers from severe dementia, usually living in some older period of his youth. Nevertheless, both old men are forgotten and no longer considered relevant to their families and they resist the modernization by not taking part in it. In both cases, the reader can sense the sympathetic voice of the authors towards these old men; while it is apparent that even though they do not share the views of the modern ways, they do not stand in the way of change and the authors seem to make sure the reader feels sorry for them.

The similarities continue with the second generation, which sees the daughters of these older men both marry men who are passionate atheists and pride themselves on being modern and intellectual through their areligious lifestyles. In this sense, both Karaosmanoglu and Adivar chose to portray their own generation through men who are over-reactive to religion and deeply concerned with only following their intellect. The views of these men are bleaker than those of the women of the third generation,

who usually do not get involved in their husbands' ideologies but do not oppose them either.

The third and youngest generation is where the reader meets the largest variety of characters. This portrayal of the youth demonstrates the effects of modernization, a generation that was raised with the values of the West while observing the Eastern traditions or what was left from them. Most of the younger characters portrayed in these novels are well-educated men and women who had the chance to observe and evaluate the revolution for themselves and who then chose to interpret Eastern and Western values according to their own lives.

Both writers often show different sides of the proverbial coin. There are those who misinterpret the meaning of modernization and those who adopt Western thoughts and ideas while not letting go of their Eastern values and traditions. The characters of the third generation, as the reader observes, swing from one side to the other and often struggle to find a balance. Regarding female characters, we usually witness two groups: those who only adopt the superficial aspects of modern life, indulging themselves in more superficial aspects of Western culture such as clothing, dinner parties, dancing and music while compromising their Eastern and religious values and traditions. These women are usually looking for men and daily pleasures, care deeply about their looks and appearances and are very fond of socializing. These young women almost never find themselves in happy endings. They humiliate themselves and end up alone and miserable. The reader can sense that the writer is not sympathetic towards such characters; evolving through the story, they merely approach their inevitably tragic end.

The second group of women, like Lale, are role models who rarely make mistakes. These women equate modernity with Western education, with the ability to speak one's mind freely, with the opportunity to hold oneself to an equal standard with her male peers without any dependence. The ideal young woman of the new Turkish Republic is usually portrayed, especially in Adivar's novels, as the woman who harmoniously adopts all the practical ideals of the Western world while not compromising her Eastern traditions that guide her soul.

The male characters of the third generation often have their own categories. There is usually the young man who is portrayed as the male version of the shallow female characters. These men do not concern themselves with the deeper issues of the new country; they merely want to take material advantage of the newly found Western identity. They indulge in alcohol, dance parties and women. Another category of men consists of highly ideological, politicized atheists. Finally, there is a category of young men who are capable of adopting the necessary values of the West while holding on to their Eastern values, and who are successful in harmoniously creating a new national and cultural identity for themselves.

One thing which especially stands out when examining these two extremely influential classics of Turkish literature is that these are stories that were not written for their literary value, nor do they show exemplary skills of craft. They are written with an agenda. Every character represents a different social group; some stand in the way of change and modernization, others are unable to adapt to the rapid social change and therefore fall behind, or they misinterpret the idea of Westernization,

which thus leads to degeneration. And, of course there is the beacon of hope, a representative of the new Turkish national identity, who ends up giving his or her life for the sake of the country.

The stories in both novels do not leave much room for characters who are in between or who are evolving into social groups. They are usually set in one way and their identities do not evolve throughout the novels. The interactions between characters who think or believe differently, like the argument between Safa and Recep in *Tatarcik*, usually do not lead to any of them evolving or changing their minds. The scenes are typically constructed to better highlight who they are to the reader and the reader can easily sense the author's attitude towards such characters. Looking at these two novels, it is fairly obvious that the authors are picking sides. They are not omniscient writers with equal distance from all their characters. They clearly choose sides, decry the characters they disapprove of and sympathise with the ones they believe to be honorable. They do not shy away from jumping in mid-scene to tell the reader who is doing wrong, and why and what they should have done. They make sure the message gets across. This inevitably limits the literary value of the work. The characters lack certain complexity and since the main purpose is largely to get a certain message across to the reader, the authors seem to benefit from simplistic plots and limited settings. Characters also suffer from this purpose-driven narrative, as they are usually limited to representing a certain group or type of people in society, thus they rarely evolve. Mostly, good characters stay good and bad characters stay bad, in accordance with the author's purpose and message.

## Conclusion

While some of the early Republican reforms were more significant than the others, together they signified a radical transformation for Turkey. A multi-ethnic Islamic Empire was being replaced by a secular nationalist state. It can be argued that the revolution aimed to exclude religion from public life, while making Ottoman cultural heritage difficult to access for future generations through changes in the alphabet and language. All these reforms, in the end, came at a cost. The novels that were examined in this chapter all focused on the difficulties these changes caused for different people of different generations. The older generation, usually representing the vanishing Ottoman Empire, it seemed, was no longer able to connect with its children, nor could it exist within this baffling new realm. For the younger generations, the war and the revolution were still alive topics leading them to much debate and confusion. The characters in *Tatarcik* and *Kiralik Konak* all represent a group of people in Turkey that struggled to rebuild their national and cultural identities. This chapter aimed to analyze these characters in order to get a better understanding of how the revolution and the drastic reforms it brought with it were processed by the Turkish nation.

However, this was not the sole aim of these novels. As leaders of public opinion, the writers also aimed to educate people and help the process of rebuilding a nation and a national identity. What Adivar and many authors like her strived to achieve was to create a character in the story, a hero that could be used as an example to demonstrate how a desirable balance could be achieved between Eastern values and Western modernism in order to reconstruct the perfect national/cultural identity. In *Kiralik Konak* this was Hakki Celis and in *Tatarcik* it was Lale who were the exemplifying

characters, showing those around them (and indeed the readers) what to aspire to become. In this regard, this chapter examined these novels from both perspectives in order to present a more rounded one. These two novels are primary examples from Turkish literature of this time period, inherently associated with the country's drive for modernization and Westernization and they serve as a progenitor of the roots of modern reform, as well as of education—a guide, essentially, to this rebuilding process.



## Chapter 4: Forging New Social Roles

### Introduction

Before the Turkish Republic was established, social roles had slightly begun to change within the Ottoman Empire. With the Young Turk reforms on women's education, women had also begun to publish. However, it was with the Kemalist reforms that the new social roles were really forged. These aimed to reshape rules of inheritance and monogamy, which shifted the dynamics of the old traditional Ottoman family structure. Women gained access to equal education and employment, followed by the right to elect and be elected to public office, having an active voice in politics.

Women and men began to socialize together and share social spaces. Women's newfound rights and strengthened position within society aimed to change their role as second-class citizens. How this change came about and its effects on the Turkish family was of concern to Turkish literature of this period. Many novels focused the eventual decay of the traditional Turkish family.

When the new Republic of Turkey decided to take the West as a role model, a natural conflict appeared, impacting almost every aspect of Turkish identity. Adivar addressed this as “the conflict of East and West in Turkey”: “it was nowhere more salient than in Turkish case”.

This chapter will examine two classic novels, *Handan* by Halide Edib Adivar and *Yaprak Dokumu* (The Fall of Leaves) by Resat Nuri Guntekin, both of which focus on families who struggle or oscillate between modernism and traditionalism. In these settings, characters usually find themselves in situations of mutual conflict. Their

struggle between Eastern values against Western modernism becomes all the more apparent.

Such tension is most poignant in social spaces and family life. As discussed in the previous chapter, this usually manifests itself as a generation gap, where the older generation finds it harder to abandon their Ottoman identities, Eastern values and traditions whereas the younger generation yearns for the freedom and the modern lifestyle Westernism can offer. Guntekin's *Yaprak Dokumu* narrates the “destruction” of a family, caused by this conflict and the generation gap, whereas Adivar's *Handan* recounts the difficulties of the same conflict for women.

In sum, changes in family dynamics, social and generational roles have been debated Turkish literature. Authors have used these themes as a platform for discussion and reconstruction of the new national and cultural Turkish identity.

### **Change of the Family Unit and First Signs of Feminism**

With the 1908 Young Turk revolution, a new era of social reforms began. This specifically made itself apparent within the press, social life and education. The Young Turks were clear on the sort of nationalism they hoped to build and strived for a more modern and cultivated society. Also, 1908 was a particularly important date in Turkish history, as, for the first time, the government was held accountable by the parliament. Absolute monarchy was abolished.<sup>374</sup> According to Feroz Ahmad this was due to a “rush” in making social amendments to fill the gap created by the previous Hamidian generation:

---

<sup>374</sup> Kansu, 1908 Devrimi, Istanbul 2011, p.1

“The Young Turks experimented with virtually every aspect of life; hardly anything was left untouched. They not only changed the political system but they also attempted to refashion society by borrowing more freely from the West than ever before. [...] Though it is still too early to talk about feminism or women’s liberation, the Young Turk period did see the establishment of a women’s organization committed to their welfare.”<sup>375</sup>

The reforms took a different turn with the declaration of the new Republic; they subsequently became more poignant and were enforced by law, affecting every aspect of life from clothing to education, marriage to script, not to mention the ways of “socializing” and social roles. The effects and the aftermath of these changes and social shifts became the main themes in Turkish literature. One of the most influential novels from this era covering reforms and modernization against Sultan Abdulhamid II’s regime is *Handan*.<sup>376</sup> Written in 1912, first as a serial in *Tanin* newspaper, then as a book the same year, it looks at the evolution of social life as well as people’s ideals and roles. It also examines womanhood and feminism in relation with the emerging Turkish cultural identity and the new family structure.

*Handan* is the novel that brought widespread fame to Adivar.<sup>377</sup> On a personal level, Adivar left her husband when the latter decided to marry another woman as a second wife. After this incident Adivar changed her pen name from Halide Salih to Halide

---

<sup>375</sup> Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, New York 2000, p. 31

<sup>376</sup> Adivar, *Handan*, Istanbul 2011

<sup>377</sup> Enigun, *Halide Edib Adivar’ın Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati meselesi*, Istanbul 2007, p. 108

Edib.<sup>378</sup> The novels she wrote during these turbulent and heartbroken times such as *Seviye Talip* (1910), *Handan* (1912) and *Son Eseri* (1913), examined womanhood, marriage, social roles and love with a particular focus on the aspect of inequality.<sup>379</sup> Adivar's inspiration was her own life.

As for her writings during the Second Constitutional Era, they identified educated women's place in society. Adivar typically chose misery and death as an end for her female lead characters. This was a trend in her early literary works, however, as time progressed and women's place in society strengthened in the new Republic, Adivar started to imagine "happier" endings for her leading female characters.<sup>380381</sup>

Social criticism through novels and short stories were a widely used technique, and literature became accessible to a broad audience in the form of serials in magazines and newspapers.<sup>382</sup> Adivar's early novels such, as *Heyula* (1909), *Raik'in Annesi* (1909), *Seviye Talip* (1910), *Handan* (1912) and *Son Eseri* (1913) focused specifically on marriage, motherhood, gender inequality, love and women's education.<sup>383</sup> Halide Edib Adivar went to England after the *31 March Incident*<sup>384</sup> and traces of this visit

---

<sup>378</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 41

<sup>379</sup> Adivar, *Handan*, Istanbul 2011, p. 9

<sup>380</sup> Enigun, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 281

<sup>381</sup> A good example for the latter category would be *Tatarcik* and its protagonist, Lale.

<sup>382</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 387

<sup>383</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 396

<sup>384</sup> The 31 March Incident was the suppression of the Ottoman counter-coup of 1909 by the *Hareket Ordusu* ("Army of Action"), which was the 11th Salonika Reserve Infantry Division of the Third Army (Ottoman Empire) stationed in the Balkans commanded by Mahmud Shevket Pasha on 24 April 1909.

could be seen in *Seviye Talip* as well as in *Handan* and *Yeni Turan* (1912), which were written roughly around the same time.

However, as mentioned earlier, the novel that received most attention from the general public, as well as literary circles, was *Handan*. According to Karaosmanoglu, *Handan* was an admirable novel for creating lively and complex female characters. Also, in many ways, it was an autobiographical work, asking the question, “What will happen to a well-educated, intellectual woman in this society?”<sup>385</sup>

The author’s choice of technique in narrating the story of *Handan* is intriguing. A well-educated, smart and cultivated young woman, society is not yet ready to accept her. Therefore, she is regarded as strange and odd. Instead of Adivar directly telling the reader the story of Handan, or letting her do it, it is those around Handan who tell her story through letter correspondence. This way the reader gets to hear Handan’s story not only from herself, but mainly from her immediate circle of friends, family and remote acquaintances.<sup>386</sup> For this reason, *Handan* can be regarded as a novel with multiple layers, but featuring a main point: intellectual women are misunderstood.<sup>387</sup>

The broad reach of Adivar’s work was the result of a great increase in the freedom of press during the Second Constitutional Era. Her first writings were articles published in the *Tanin* newspaper under the name of Halide Salih and were received with applause and curiosity. In the words of Karaosmanoglu:

---

<sup>385</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 396

<sup>386</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 397

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

“Whoever that lady was, she was not going to be content with just writing about daily matters. With this anticipation, I scanned all the newspapers every day, starting with *Tanin*, and I searched for the name Halide Edib. Before too long, I came across her name, I think it was *Tanin* again, under a poem titled *Harap Mabetler* and I was joyous like a child during an Eid morning.”<sup>388</sup>

One of her early articles in *Tanin* that attracted significant attention was entitled “*Besigi Sallayan El Dunyaya Hukmeder*” (The hand that rocks the cradle can rule the world). Adivar requested that gender inequality in education be addressed:

“We need, as the British call it - a rounded education, it is time to cleanse our minds from all the old-woman tales. We should not be regarded as objects that can be placed on a shelf to be looked at, or maids that are responsible for your comfort at home. We are strong, capable, intellectual women who will raise strong, capable, intellectual men.”<sup>389</sup>

After this, Adivar wrote in many newspapers and magazines, alongside *Tanin*, on women’s issues, education and politics while her short stories and novels began to get published as serials. From these writings, it can be observed that Adivar’s main concern was liberation and equality.<sup>390</sup>

---

<sup>388</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Gençlik ve Edebiyat Hatıraları*, Ankara 1969, pp.327-328

<sup>389</sup> Adivar, *Tanin*, no. 6, 24 Temmuz 1324/6, August 1908

<sup>390</sup> Enigun, *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı*, İstanbul 2013, pp. 107-108

*Handan* is a manifestation of these issues. As a pioneer of Turkish feminism, Adivar writes about modern, well-educated, intellectual women who struggle to find a place for themselves in society. She describes their pursuit to become “individuals” while fulfilling their roles as wives and mothers in a traditional Turkish family.

The reforms that took place during the Second Constitutional Era were not specifically targeted to women, however, there were serious steps taken towards education of girls. As Halide Edib states,

“Women got their real chance in 1908. The Young Turkish or the Constitutional Revolution brought forward men who meant business. Their political and social creed laid strong emphasis on education, and especially in women’s education they accomplished something very memorable and great. The very atmosphere became freer for women and it was fully realized that a new Turkey could never be created without collaboration. Women themselves began in the earliest days to create organizations. [...] Education became the motto of women and for the first time women of the richer classes also threw themselves into work.

On the other hand, the state took a very energetic step. It modernized the entire educational system of Turkey and equalized educational rights. The normal schools were [multiplied and conducted on better and modern lines]; women’s colleges sprang up all over the country. The first building of the period is the Women’s Training College in Istanbul. The Young Turkish regime also began to send women students to European

universities and colleges; in 1916 Istanbul University opened its doors to women. In 1921 there were two lady doctors practicing.”<sup>391</sup>

As a devoted educator herself and also the first female professor of Turkey,<sup>392</sup> Adivar’s emphasis on education was always strong and had an important place in her literature. Many of her main characters such as Lale of *Tatarcik*, Aliye of *Vurun Kahpeye* and Ayse of *Sonsuz Panayir* (1946) were teachers and many others took upon themselves to educate those around them. The year *Handan* was published was marked by women’s emancipation. Thus, the air of feminism was easily detectable throughout the novel, and Adivar portrayed the young thinking women as struggling to reconstruct their identities.

*Handan* tells the story of a young woman, who gave her name to the book. Raised with British education and manners, Handan is a well-brought up woman, and always the centre of attention. On the surface the novel is the love story of Handan and her brother-in-law, who takes care of her during her miserable marriage and illness. However, the multi-layered structure of the story contains more themes than a simple love story; Adivar succeeds to address the conflict between East and West, feminism, modernism and traditionalism.

The story unfolds with flashbacks and letters written between characters. Therefore, the reader has the opportunity of experiencing the story through multiple perspectives. Handan is not a traditional wife and later in the novel, the reader understands that she

---

<sup>391</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, pp. 215-217

<sup>392</sup> 1940, Istanbul University, English Department



is not the sort of woman who would be content with being a passive member of the family. The novel has a strong feminist undertone that signals the direction of change in the family as well as in society.

Indeed, in the midst of Westernization of Turkey, the novel is both the creator and the product of socio-cultural change.<sup>393</sup> When examining the body of Turkish literature from the Tanzimat period towards the first decade of the new Republic, it becomes apparent that the family is usually the main focus for the writers. This makes sense, as family is the smallest unit in society and by studying it in depth, one can gain a greater understanding of what is going on in society at large. In this regard, *Kiralik Konak* by Karaosmanoglu, *Handan* by Adivar and *Fatih-Harbiye* (1931) by Peyami Safa are a few examples. The tension point is usually similar in these novels: a member of the family from the younger generation is eager to become “Westernized” and live a more modern life while the older generation would want to stay loyal to their Eastern roots and Ottoman traditions. This conflict causes serious friction within the family unit, therefore within society.

Karaosmanoglu, Guntekin, Adivar and Safa study each of their characters in detail, almost psychoanalyzing their thought-process. But it can be argued that they go a step further by warning their readers about the dangers of misinterpreting Westernization such as only adopting the superficial aspects of it, or severing all ties with their Ottoman identity and traditions. The characters usually end up suffering because they fail to find a balance between Western modernism and Eastern traditions and writers

---

<sup>393</sup> Erdogan, “Resat Nuri Guntekin’in “Yaprak Dokumu” Adli Romaninda Degismenin Sosyo-Kulturel Boyutlari”, *Istanbul Universitesi Sosyoloji Konferanslari Dergisi*, No: 31 2005, p.178

are very explicit regarding who is doing this right and wrong, almost like a guide for their readers.

Guntekin was particularly concerned with mirroring the social changes of his time, and his novels include important social data. A fine example of this is *Yaprak Dokumu* (The Fall of Leaves, 1930). On a personal level, Guntekin studied French and literature at school.<sup>394</sup> He then became a French teacher and traveled all around Anatolia to teach. His exposure to rural villages and interactions with the Anatolian people left a significant impression on him, which manifested itself in his later writings.

A prolific writer in various genres, his works include fifteen novels, four volumes of short stories and over twenty plays. While some of his novels focus on human emotions, others are more ideological.<sup>395</sup> It can be argued that he penned the most loved and cherished Turkish novel of the Republican era,<sup>396</sup> *Calikusu* (1922), where he told the story of Feride, a young idealistic woman who goes to a rural Anatolian village as a teacher. *Calikusu*<sup>397</sup> was published during the heart of the Independence War and reflected the struggle that Anatolia had to endure during this rough time. *Yaprak Dokumu*<sup>398</sup>, on the other hand, a much shorter novel, takes place in Istanbul and has a very different tone from *Calikusu*. *Yaprak Dokumu* was published in 1930,

---

<sup>394</sup> [http://www.turkedebiyati.org/resat\\_nuri\\_guntekin.html](http://www.turkedebiyati.org/resat_nuri_guntekin.html)

<sup>395</sup> Aytas, “The Characters reflected in Turkish novel in our Westernization Adventure”, *G. U. Gazi Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi*, Cilt 22, Sayi 3, 2002, p.212

<sup>396</sup> Enigun, Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati, Istanbul 2013, p. 286

<sup>397</sup> Guntekin, *Calikusu*, Istanbul 2016

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

almost seven years after the war had ended and the new Republic was established. It can be argued that the changes in circumstances had reflected themselves in these novels: both in the nature of his characters and his voice as an author. The characters in *Yaprak Dokumu* seem detached and less emotional when compared to characters in *Calikusu*, and perhaps the same can be argued for the tone of the author's voice. Guntekin uses a more detached, even colder, tone when he narrates the events in *Yaprak Dokumu*.

*Yaprak Dokumu* is essentially a story about the collapse of a family.<sup>399</sup> It begins with Ali Riza Bey, a much-respected man with a very strict moral compass who resigns from his job as a civil servant after an incident involving a young woman he helped to get hired and a young man running the office. This incident quickly creates a domino effect where his five children and wife, one by one, no longer wish to live by his moral principles and rules. This inevitably drags the family towards certain ruin. The novel, given how short it is,<sup>400</sup> not to mention the pace of the story, creates the impression that it sought to make a particular point, to deliver a message and the story does not want to branch out or lose time in doing so. *Yaprak Dokumu* examines social transformation and how destructive it can be,<sup>401</sup> and according to Inci Enigun, the reason for this is the collapse of "certain truths" and traditions that were blindly followed for decades.<sup>402</sup>

---

<sup>399</sup> Hayber, Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismalari, Istanbul 1993), p. 348

<sup>400</sup> *Yaprak Dokumu* is only 150 pages long.

<sup>401</sup> Hayber, Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismalari, Istanbul 1993, p. 348

<sup>402</sup> Enigun, Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati, Istanbul 2013, pp. 288-289

The novel begins with a short yet striking scene between Ali Riza Bey at his work place and a young ex-colleague who came to visit the office to gloat about his current financial and social status. The colleague, who flaunts his newfound success in the business world to his old friends, tells them that he has a greedy nature and that he wishes to eat in nice places, to dress in fancy clothes and to drive expensive cars. His own father was just too virtuous; he used to say that the best inheritance a father can leave for his children is a good name. Finally, one day this colleague realizes that a good name is not enough unless material goods accompany it. So he quits his job at the *Altin Yaprak* Company and begins to work for a commission merchant, doing work in customs. In less than a month, his financial status increases significantly.<sup>403</sup>

This three-page long monologue that opens the novel is actually a microcosmic foreshadowing of things to come. This man, who decided that morals and principals in life will not get him very far, is barely thirty years of age, while Ali Riza Bey has already reached a certain age with teenage children. While listening to him during his lunch break with the rest of the staff, this tale of success causes him lose his appetite and he puts his fork down. When the young man sees this he says,

“Sir, I guess you do not approve of my words. Nevertheless, they are the reality...”<sup>404</sup>

Ali Riza Bey retorts that it is none of his business and everyone is entitled to do whatever they please. However, he asks, is it fair to come here and talk about these

---

<sup>403</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, pp. 5-8

<sup>404</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul, 2016, p. 9

things to people who are even satisfied with their lives? Is it all right to evoke these rebellious feelings inside them? The man dismisses this notion and tells Ali Riza Bey that he is not the only one who speaks of these truths. He adds that, “Especially after the Great War, a strange awakening took over the world,” and the people of this time are not like the people of Ali Riza Bey’s generation. They are more ambitious and greedy and the old values and morals are now being shattered and changed.<sup>405</sup>

Ali Riza Bey terminates the conversation by stating that he is an old-school and it is impossible for them to see eye to eye. However, as a father of five children coming of age, the words of this greedy man unsettles him and this first scene of the book, following this conversation, ends with Ali Riza Bey opening his hands to pray for the protection of his children.<sup>406</sup>

*Yaprak Dokumu* is a novel with a fast pace. It has multiple major characters such as the two daughters Leyla and Necla, the son Sevkett, Ali Riza Efendi himself and his wife Hayriye Hanim. The plot moves without pausing for the reader to digest what is happening to this family. It is almost as Guntekin wishes to give the feeling of how fast things moved and changed during the period of Westernization in real life. This opening scene of the novel almost prepares the reader for what is to come and although Ali Riza Bey prays for his children, the reader gets the sense that this family’s fall is almost inevitable. This is quite a different approach from Adivar’s novels where it always feels like there is a chance, however faint, that the characters can survive whatever they are battling. However, in *Yaprak Dokumu*, the characters

---

<sup>405</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 10

<sup>406</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 11

are stiff, instead of waiting to see who would be willing to change and evolve, the reader is almost expected to see who would be broken and left behind.

Ali Riza Bey is described as a “hard-working, wise man whose qualities are of no use to him.”<sup>407</sup> As a civil servant he had travelled all over Anatolia and could fluently speak Arabic, Farsi, English and French. He is portrayed as a man who has a passion for literature and reading; he even wrote some poetry in his youth. He is neat, polite and his sense of justice is almost crippling. Guntekin almost casts all good qualities a person could have on Ali Riza Bey, which sets him up as the moral compass of the story from the beginning. This quality is what defines his character, but it is also his biggest weakness. His friends say, “He is a good man... He is like a prophet. Kiss his hand, get his prayer, talk to him about science, have him read poetry to you... Whatever you do, just don’t ask him to work for you.”<sup>408</sup>

As Ali Riza Efendi refers to himself as “a man of old times”<sup>409</sup> at the beginning of the story, it would be a fair assumption to say that as a character he represents the Ottoman Empire and the values that the old Empire carried. However, Ali Riza Bey fails to keep up with the changing society and he refuses to compromise. Not only could he not understand or analyze these changes correctly, but he also fails to educate his children about such changes occurring in the nation which eventually makes him redundant to his family.<sup>410</sup>

---

<sup>407</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 12

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

<sup>409</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 10

<sup>410</sup> Aytas, “The Characters reflected in Turkish novel in our Westernization Adventure”, *G. U. Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Cilt 22, Sayı 3, 2002, p.214

This theme of Ali Riza Bey symbolizing the Ottoman Empire is quite strong in the novel. This is especially highlighted when he decides to quit his job at the government's office, where he worked for many years, over a moral dispute with his boss, who used to be a student of Ali Riza Bey's. When he comes back home that night and tells his wife what happened, for the first time in their marriage, he faces a side of his wife that he did not even realize existed. His wife no longer respects him and decisions are made without even consulting him. Ali Riza Bey almost becomes a shadow of what he used to be—much like the Ottoman Empire in its decline.

After quitting his job, Ali Riza Efendi discovers that his only son found a job that would allow him to make good money. This means that the family would not suffer financially because of his resignation; he believed he did the right thing by quitting his job immediately in order to keep his name clean. However, his wife does not agree with this:

“If someone else heard the way you speak, they'd think you had a promotion! With the 115 lira you got from the company we barely survived. And today you said that you lost that too. This means starvation for us... Should I celebrate and hug you? A little mercy...”

Ali Riza Bey was lost for words. After swallowing a few times he said:

“But dignity... We saved our dignity!”<sup>411</sup>

---

<sup>411</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, pp. 36-37

Ali Riza Bey thought that this word would do the trick and get the message across to his wife. However, she replies that she too lived with dignity but if it was her, she would keep her job for the sake of their children. Against her husband's rage towards her indifference to his moral principles, she concludes:

“I believed you like a child until my hair turned white... I thought to myself, ‘he’s an old, educated man, he must know what he is doing.’ But enough is enough... So you’re saying quitting this job is to save your dignity; then quit. But do not forget that life is getting more and more expensive... See, I’m not hiding it anymore. It is getting harder and harder to control your angelic children. If my children start to suffer because of poverty I will wrap my fingers around your neck. I will not leave you in piece even if you die.”<sup>412</sup>

A theme expressed by many authors is that women, through their misinterpretation of Westernization, who are eager to modernize, can cause mayhem, moral degradation and eventually the collapse of the family unit. This particular theme is vital to understanding how society reacted towards Westernization and the abandonment of Islamic traditions. Why this role was particularly cast to women in the literature of the time will be further analyzed and examined in the next chapter. However, in order to dissect *Yaprak Dokumu*, this topic needs to be briefly analyzed here as well.

Just like Seniha in *Kiralik Konak*, a generation of young women who are captivated by the allure of a modern lifestyle, which includes dancing, shopping, socializing, flirting with the opposite sex and drinking alcohol are portrayed as the biggest threat

---

<sup>412</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 39



to Turkish society. In *Yaprak Dokumu*, Ferhunde, the wife of Ali Riza Bey's only son Sevket; and Ali Riza Bey's two daughters Leyla and Necla belong to this generation of young women. With the support of Hayriye Hanim, they eventually destroy the family.

It can be argued that *Yaprak Dokumu* is more of a character study than a plot driven novel. Like many novels from this specific transitional period in Turkey, each character represents a certain type of person within society. The intriguing aspect of *Yaprak Dokumu* is, however, how these characters are separated from each other. Guntekin almost chose a 'men against women' approach where men of the family are portrayed as morally strong people who are being victimized by women under the spell of Westernization. This can be based on Guntekin's own observations in Istanbul, which is different from Adivar's. The latter paints the portrait of strong, dedicated, well-educated women, capable of making sound and informed decisions, whereas Guntekin's portrait of women in *Yaprak Dokumu* is almost the opposite. Almost all the women in the novel are uneducated, selfish and financially dependent on their fathers or husbands.

It is also important to draw attention to the fact that Guntekin's other novels with female protagonists such as *Acimak* (To Pity, 1928) and *Calikusu* (The Wren) are different in nature when compared to *Yaprak Dokumu*. In *Acimak*, Zehra is the head teacher of a school in rural Anatolia and she is independent, smart, strong, determined and well-educated. In *Calikusu*, Feride is once again a strong-headed, smart teacher with strong moral principles. The fact that *Yaprak Dokumu* takes an opposing view can be because Guntekin witnessed a difference between educated women who all the

same did not abandon e their moral principles despite Westernization, and women who chose only to adopt superficial aspects of it.

Since *Yaprak Dokumu* is more of a character study, it would be more appropriate to examine the main characters one by one. Ali Riza Bey, although the tough main character from whose eyes the reader gets to experience the story, might be considered a flat character. When studying characters in novels, it is crucial to look for what motivates these characters possess, in order to understand who they truly are.<sup>413</sup> What motivates Ali Riza Bey is staying true to his moral code, being decent and leaving behind a good, clean name as a legacy. Everything he does serves this purpose. However, the motivation behind the actions of his two daughters Leyla and Necla is Westernization. Ali Riza Bey's daughters wish to live a more modern and superficial life filled with pleasure. The motivation for his wife, Hayriye Hanim, is to cater to her daughters' wishes. When all these motivations are mapped, it becomes more apparent how each character behaves and why. However, it also demonstrates that this is not a novel where the protagonists act 'out of character' or do anything that might surprise the reader. They do not change or evolve, which might show us that *Yaprak Dokumu* may not be a novel that is written for its literary merits, such as *Calikusu*, but that it was a novel written with an agenda in mind, to deliver a message, or perhaps even a warning.

When Ali Riza Bey becomes unemployed and begins to spend more time at home, he nearly loses all his control over the house. Once the role of breadwinner is upon the only son in the house, Ali Riza Bey's wife becomes extremely dismissive towards her

---

<sup>413</sup> Thomas, *Monkeys With Typewriters*, Edinburgh 2012, p.269

husband. This could be interpreted as the fall of Ottoman Empire and how the rhetoric regarding the Empire changed once it began to lose land and its economical stability. The loss of the Empire's economic strength is closely related to Ali Riza Bey's loss of power in the household. One day he even states this out loud to his wife, saying, "So you only cared about me for my status and the money I earned?" Upon which she replied, "So it is... (*Kendi dusen aglamaz*)<sup>414</sup>."<sup>415</sup>

Although Ali Riza Bey's character is static throughout the story, there is one person who does go through a great change. At the beginning, Hayriye Hanim is presented to the reader by Guntekin as a "quiet, decent woman"<sup>416</sup> and at several occasions, Ali Riza Bey thinks of her as ignorant and uneducated<sup>417</sup>. But, by the time the reader gets to meet this "quiet, uneducated woman", she already found out that her husband lost his job and that there will be a shortage of income. This totally alters her character. The reader also finds out that she is neither quiet nor decent. One event after another other demonstrates that she is, in fact, a political and even malignant woman.

Despite these developments, it can be argued that the real change of dynamic in the family unit does not occur between the husband and wife. Instead, it is the second generation, the two daughters Leyla and Necla, who alter the nature of the family. Perhaps, if they had not manipulated their mother, Hayriye Hanim may not have

---

<sup>414</sup> Turkish proverb. It could be translated as, "He who falls by himself should not cry," meaning: if a misfortune befalls one on account of one's own doing, that person does not have the right to complain about it.

<sup>415</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 45

<sup>416</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 12

<sup>417</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 40

turned against her husband. However, the greed and the eagerness to live a more Western lifestyle fuels these two young women to the extent that they eventually split their family.

As the two middle children of family, Leyla and Necla, are portrayed differently than Adivar's *Handan*. The latter's Western lifestyle does not prevent her from being smart and love, family and nationalism. Whereas Leyla and Necla are two ignorant, degenerate young women who only value material goods, earthly pleasures and a wealthy husband. These major differences between female characters may indicate the two different perspectives regarding women and their struggle to meet the expectations of the new Westernized lifestyle.

Ali Riza Bey's only son, Sevket, on the other hand, is portrayed as a "saint" in his father's eyes, as he is the only reliable one to support his father during hardship. Ali Riza Bey states: "I used to think of myself as a decent person and was proud of that but I see that now compared to you, I am nothing."<sup>418</sup> In the end, though, Sevket goes into prison for fraud; however, this is clearly because of his wife, Ferhunde, a manipulative, morally corrupted woman. Sevket's character points to two major themes from the literature of the transitional period: the generation gap and the fact that women mislead men due to a misinterpretation of Westernization.

### **The New Republic and Social Life**

Arguably, one of the biggest impacts Westernization had was on the everyday social practices of Turkish people, from the way they dressed to their interactions with the

---

<sup>418</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 55

opposite sex. Almost every novel that has been examined in this dissertation has one or more scenes where social interactions play out under the microscope. In *Kiralik* Seniha socializes either in the presence of men alone or at a dinner party. The same can be argued for the female characters in *Handan* and *Yaprak Dokumu*.

The changing social life and the tension it caused, as well as the conflict of East and West are large issues in *Handan*. Most of the characters are very modern in the way they have been educated. They speak several languages perfectly including English. Most of them have lived in Europe at some stage in their lives, and they feel like they fit in quiet nicely.<sup>419</sup> *Handan* opens with a letter from Refik Cemal to his friend in Paris, Server, as he makes a big announcement to his friend:

“I am getting married Server! And you won’t believe to whom - one of the modern daughters of Cemal Bey!”<sup>420</sup>

He continues to write that the daughters are known as the “New World’s girls” by their neighbors and since Refik Cemal is quite conservative himself, he picked the quietest and the calmest of these three girls.<sup>421</sup>

At the beginning of the story, Handan is only mentioned by other characters. Refik Cemal’s fiancée, Neriman states that even though Handan is far away in London, her presence can still be felt. When Refik Cemal goes to Cemal Bey’s house to see his fiancée for the first time, he finds that the living room is, “very organized, all the

---

<sup>419</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar’in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 108

<sup>420</sup> Adivar, *Handan*, Istanbul 2011, p. 11

<sup>421</sup> Ibid.

chairs are placed against the wall in a military fashion and a presence of a woman can be felt.”<sup>422</sup> The only thing that is noticeable is, “in the middle of the living room there is a small table with a cover on it that has photos of little palm trees and a chair with some dark, random pillows thrown on it.”<sup>423</sup> This chair that stands out is Handan’s chair meaning that Handan does not fit within traditions, she stands out from her contemporaries.

Once again, Adivar’s main focus is on her characters, rather than the events or the plot itself. The novel is a collection of character profiles of its time, mostly following individuals writing about other characters in their letters. The first one the reader meets is Refik Cemal, “conventional” person, through his first letter to his friend Server.<sup>424</sup> He has opinions about women and men and their specific roles in marriage. This becomes more apparent in one of his letters to his wife, Neriman, after meeting Handan and her husband Husnu Pasha for the first time. He learns that Handan is unwell and her husband is going to drop her off in Italy before returning to London. After finding this out he writes,

“I couldn’t really understand this. How can a woman of twenty-three, twenty-four be left alone, a Turkish woman nevertheless? Especially Husnu Pasha, this wanton, indifferent man, I’m sure he is not taking well care of his wife. Handan has this aura of self-confidence, this self-reliance to her that no woman her age should have; this fills me with feelings of

---

<sup>422</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 13

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

<sup>424</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 11

rebellion and pain. Women should always be under gentle, reliable protection, should they not Neriman?”<sup>425</sup>

Refik Cemal’s first encounter with Handan takes place in Marseille. Refik Cemal flees to France after his superior at the *Hariciye*,<sup>426</sup> where he works, telling him that he is under suspicion and two strange-looking men come to gather information about him. The story takes place during the despotic Sultan Abdulhamid II period and oppression could be felt: “These days, the air in Istanbul is heavy with pressure and oppression that I find myself feeling it on my shoulders.”<sup>427</sup> Refik Cemal’s superior advises him that he should leave the country, that there are openings in the UK and Austria offices. In the end, Refik Cemal gets sent to France, and has to leave Neriman behind as she is pregnant and in no shape to travel that far with her husband.

While exploring Marseille, Refik Cemal ends up in a famous church called the Notre-Dame and there a young lady approaches him. “Graceful, polite and very well-dressed. She approached me and extended her hand.”<sup>428</sup> After the initial introduction, Handan invites Refik Cemal to their hotel room that evening for tea with her and her husband, Husnu Pasha. Husnu Pasha, unlike Handan, does not leave a good impression on Refik Cemal, “He appears aloof and vain, extending his hand to me like he is doing me a favor.”<sup>429</sup>

---

<sup>425</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 40

<sup>426</sup> *trans.* foreign affairs office

<sup>427</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 31

<sup>428</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 38

<sup>429</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 39

The room that Handan and Husnu Pasha reside in is in one of Marseille's first-class hotels, decorated elegantly with lots of flowers. Since Adivar narrates the story through letters, she employs first-person perspective and the reader gets to understand what sort of impression Handan makes on an intelligent yet conservative man. He first tells his wife that Handan is, once again, superbly dressed, but he is "surprised that she revealed her arms and her neck. She has a nice décolleté."<sup>430</sup> He also points out that Husnu Pasha stares a lot at his wife and there is something about this stare that Refik Cemal does not like.

"This is a bad stare, Neriman, I did not like it one bit. I had the feeling that he sees Handan as something to be devoured during nice and hungry moments and would neglect her otherwise. Handan only spoke to me as if she did not notice this stare."<sup>431</sup>

The reader gets to feel the love and devotion that Refik Cemal has for his wife, Neriman. However, in the third letter he writes to his friend Server after seven months of marriage, he mentions that she is rather simple-minded and does not like to occupy her time with deep and complicated issues such as sociology, politics or history. She enjoys music, and literature to some extent, but she does not really care about the state the nation is in.

"We talked about everything with Handan! All the subjects that put you to sleep, Neriman: sociology, economics, philosophy, and even politics. As

---

<sup>430</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 41

<sup>431</sup> Ibid.



we conversed, her bright eyes, the allure of her hair disappeared; I could no longer see her white bosom.”<sup>432</sup>

What drives Refik Cemal away from the hotel room is an apparent show of affection between the husband and wife; Husnu Pasha, bored with the conversation the two are having, rests his head on his wife’s lap and Handan begins to stroke his lips with her fingers. This angers Refik Cemal and at once, he wishes them a good night and leaves their hotel room.<sup>433</sup> This scene is interesting in the sense that it examines a woman’s place in social life, especially among men. Handan can easily converse with men on subjects considered “deep” and or even “unsuitable” for women. However, how women should behave with their husbands in social events is still an issue of discussion in the novel. Handan showing affection to her husband in front of others clearly upsets Refik Cemal, who leaves the room immediately.

Up to this point in the novel, the reader has only become acquainted with Handan from the description of other characters. However, intrigued by the intellect and knowledge of this young woman, Refik Cemal writes to his wife asking for more information on Handan. Neriman complies and she tells the story of Handan, from their first encounter as girls, mostly through the letters that Handan sent to Neriman in their youth. In this way, the reader gets to know Handan through her own words. The portrait of this young, complex character reads like Adivar is telling the reader about her own youth since some of the similarities are uncanny.

---

<sup>432</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 42.

<sup>433</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 43.

Neriman arrived at her aunt's house at the age of six after the death of her parents.<sup>434</sup>

From then on, the oldest of the three siblings, Handan, took her under her wings and the two become the closest of all four siblings. All girls have followed a strict and versatile education, as Neriman explains:

“A lot of faces have passed through this room with ink stains on its walls and a worn table with chairs. Men with beards and without beards, teachers of Kur'an and religion with their turbans; English teachers, some who are silly and fun and some who are dry and scary; so many teachers of music such as Armenians, Hungarians and Italians. We as children have always taken lessons from the same teachers but Handan left us all behind. If you look at our knowledge today, you will find some language skills and literature but Handan is different. Learning was her passion. She wanted to know, know more, not just through books, but through nature and people, she wanted to learn everything that was apparent and not so apparent. [...] We were content with learning to speak one or two languages and mastered the piano while her passion for learning kept growing. New and higher teachers were hired for her. And finally it was poor Nazim who was her last teacher. She learned music, literature, philosophy, sociology and much more from him. Nazim was not just a teacher of art and social sciences for Handan, he was much more. He was a teacher of life.”<sup>435</sup>

---

<sup>434</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 45.

<sup>435</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 47

Neriman explains how Handan came to be the woman that she is. At the age of sixteen, Handan is curious, alert and passionate about the world around her. Adivar's stand on education, especially concerning young girls is, once again, emphasized.

Nazim is the son of Selim Bey who is Cemal Bey's brother. As a sixteen-year old girl, Handan goes to Maltepe for the summer, meets Nazim in Selim Bey's mansion, where he is back from Handan and Nazim feel close to each other, but Handan feels pressure in front of Nazim, who is highly educated and politically driven.<sup>436</sup> Nazim questions her about music, literature and sociology and on all these accounts Handan feels inadequate in the presence of Nazim. This, however, fuels her desire to work harder:

“I will, however, work and work, Neriman. Maybe I will not shine or become famous, but I will love people with a compassion and selflessness that no one has ever experienced, I will offer every last drop of my soul to them.”<sup>437438</sup>

In another passage, Handan explains her biggest aim in life is “travelling all through Anatolia, preaching to the public to awaken their souls.”<sup>439</sup> This is one of the many similarities Handan possesses with the author. Adivar also spent her life preaching to the public in order to awaken their minds and souls on issues such as democracy,

---

<sup>436</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 54

<sup>437</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 56

<sup>438</sup> This is similar to the oath Aliye makes in *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore): “Your land is my land, your home is my home; I will be a mother, a light for the children of this place and I will fear nothing, for this I swear!”

<sup>439</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 60

gender equality, education, nationalism, modernism and Islam. The speech she gave at Sultanahmet is a great example of this pursuit.<sup>440</sup> The passion to learn and then educate those around her, as well as the entire country, is a shared pursuit of the author and Handan. But similarities do not end with this ideological mission, as the two women also share the same heartaches and turbulences in their private lives. These ambitions have caused difficulty in Adivar's own life and are reflected in Handan. The fact that Handan is ambitious and wishes to take an active role in social life, travel more, learn more and be outside of the family house, where women were considered to belong, eventually results in a tragic end for her.

On the other hand, in *Yaprak Dokumu*, as mentioned earlier, Guntekin takes a grimmer approach towards women taking part in the social arena. Guntekin specifically focuses on Leyla and Necla through Ali Rıza Bey's perspective, so that the reader can understand the gaps in their social lives. A critical and hurtful tone

---

<sup>440</sup> The Sultanahmet Demonstrations was a series of rallies in 1919 at Sultanahmet, Istanbul to protest the occupation of Izmir by Greek forces after the First World War. The demonstrations were organized by Türk Ocağı and Karakol society. Many important figures of the Ottoman Empire participated, such as Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, Halide Edib Adivar, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, Rıza Nur, Selim Sırrı Tarcan, İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, Fahreddin Hayri Bey, Kemal Mithad and Şükûfe Nihal Başar who all called for resistance against the foreign invasion. Halide Edib was a major speaker during the demonstrations, stating the following:

"Muslims! Turks! The Turk and the Muslims are now experiencing their darkest day.

Night, a dark night. But there is no night without morning in life. Tomorrow we will create a glittering morning, tearing this terrible night. Women! We have now no tools such as cannons, guns; but a greater and a stronger weapon, we have; Hak and Allah. Guns and cannons may be lost, but Hak and Allah are everlasting. We, with our men, ask for the strongest, most intelligent most courageous cabinet from our own heart that will represent us the best."

dictates these scenes and the reader, once again, understands the vast generation gap caused by rapid Westernization. Guntekin makes this clear by stating that, “Leyla and Necla did not like the way the family lived; they wanted novelty, entertainment and many other things.”<sup>441</sup> The eldest daughter in the house, Fikriye, on the other hand is more mature and she does not approve of the way her sisters behave, which causes arguments in the family.

Guntekin also highlights that the problem with these two young women, Leyla and Necla, is that they have not received a proper education.<sup>442</sup> Ali Riza Bey thinks that had they been raised with honor and decency and all that was done for their education was to keep them confined to the home. However, once Ali Riza Bey loses the control of the house, the two girls begin to rebel:

“They [Necla and Leyla] openly began to say what they thought: How could their parents confine them to the house? Who gave them the right? All the other girls were going out and having fun, why should they stay in this hell? The new name of the house was ‘hell’ now. Weren’t they young? Wouldn’t they want to socialize, mingle with others and go dancing? Their youth was melting away. What was to become of them? [...] It was time they lifted this ban on them. If left to their own devices, perhaps they could find a husband and save themselves. The times have changed and no one knocked on each others doors anymore to ask ‘do you have a daughter to marry?’”<sup>443</sup>

---

<sup>441</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p.56

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016 p. 59

The issue of socializing is the cause of a great rupture in the family. In the spring, groups of women accompanied by men would cross the road in front of the house and go to open air dance parties. When Necla and Leyla hear the music they get angry and start a fight. The girls' wishes come true when their older brother Sevket comes home with some news one night. Sevket had been seeing a woman in the bank where he worked; however, the woman is already married and now the husband has found out and thrown his wife into the streets. Sevket is obliged to marry her immediately otherwise she will kill herself.

When Ali Riza Bey hears of this he initially rejects the idea of marriage and states that if Sevket marries this woman against Ali Riza Bey's will, he will leave this house, never to be seen again. However, Hayriye Hanim eventually convinces him that marrying this woman would be the decent, honorable thing to do since it was Sevket who put this woman in this situation. The woman in question is Ferhunde and the wedding night marks the change in social life for the two young daughters, Necla and Leyla. The youngest daughter, Ayse, also joins her sisters and together they demand new clothes for the wedding and Hayriye Hanim changes all the furniture in the house. All these changes point towards Westernization and a new modern kind of social life while the old traditions and ways, represented by Ali Riza Bey, are eagerly left behind.

The ultimate representation of the degenerate new generation who misinterprets Westernization is represented by Sevket's new wife, Ferhunde. Ali Riza Bey sees her as an arrogant and spoiled woman who believes she is entitled to whatever she

demands.<sup>444</sup> Ferhunde says that the house smells like a mosque and that all the windows and doors need to be open in order to get rid of it.<sup>445</sup> This is an important metaphor Guntekin uses to show how the new modern generation disregarded the old mentality of empire. The fact that Ferhunde uses the words “mosque smell” is interesting, because not only does it refer to the old traditions and ways of the Ottoman Empire, it also has an anti-religious tone.

With Ferhunde’s arrival to the family, Leyla and Necla finally find the friend they have been hoping would introduce them to a new exciting social circle. Ferhunde declares that there would be a “tea party with dancing” twice a week in the house and two or three nights a week they would be attending these parties at the homes of friends.<sup>446</sup> During these tea parties, furniture is moved to make room for dancing in the living room and Hayriye Hanim is jammed in the kitchen ‘playing cook’. When they attend other parties they spend all day preparing, “putting cologne on every visible part of their skin.”<sup>447</sup>

The interesting point in the book is Guntekin’s perspective on gender when it comes to these social events. Ali Riza Bey finds these events despicable and for a moment he is surprised that his son, Sevkett, is participating in them, thinking that maybe his son is now morally corrupt too. However, soon he realizes that he is still the same Sevkett:

---

<sup>444</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 71

<sup>445</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 74

<sup>446</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 78

<sup>447</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 79

“His [Sevket’s] thoughts and feelings have not been changed. He was not pleased about this current situation; he didn’t like this lifestyle or these people coming in and out of their house. However, the damage has been done and he has been caught in this current perhaps because of his wife’s influence or perhaps because of other reasons.”<sup>448</sup>

Here, it is apparent that even though Sevket is participating in all these events, his actions are justified because he is ‘manipulated by his wife’ but inside he is still the same decent, morally strong young man who simply has the misfortune of choosing the wrong woman. This is peculiar, as Guntekin refuses to cast any blame on the man of the house while women get all the blame for the degeneration and moral corruption. This is definitely a point where Guntekin and Adivar differ: in Handan, it is Handan’s husband who is morally corrupt and drags Handan into that degenerate lifestyle. Even though Handan eventually falls into an unfortunate love impasse she dies of guilt and grief and Adivar casts her as a victim, not a villain. Guntekin, on the other hand, casts Ali Riza Bey and Sevket as the victims, where Ali Riza Bey locks himself in the attic to stay away from these terrible parties; even though Sevket participates, he does not approve.

The new ways women wanted to socialize, such as “dancing on men’s laps, driving in their car at late hours of the night and talking so close to them that their mouths almost touch”<sup>449</sup> are only reflected as the wrong-doings of women. However, little is expressed regarding the other gender who is also taking part in this sort of behavior.

---

<sup>448</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 80

<sup>449</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 93



These women in the house, Ferhunde, Leyla and Necla, and the mother Hayriye Hanim who helps and enables them, eventually spend all the money the men earn, put them in debt and bring shame to the family. While the men of the house, especially Ali Riza Bey stand for traditions and the old ways of the empire, women are portrayed as the group who are yearning for modernism and a Western lifestyle.

### **Traditionalism versus Modernism**

According to Serif Mardin, change cannot be accepted naturally as it is a departure from a static ideology. This change could be regarded as dangerous, something to be avoided, so that things should go back to the way they are.<sup>450</sup> Westernization in Turkey was often associated with a departure from Islam and Islamic traditions. After all, the initial reforms of the new Republic were solely concerned with secularism.<sup>451</sup> This meant that Islam, along with its various traditions, was being erased from society. According to Mardin's argument then, it was sensible to expect backlash, especially from the older generation who associated these traditions with their national and cultural identity.

In *Yaprak Dökümü*, Guntekin is specifically focusing on the theme of old versus new, or in other words, tradition versus modernism, just like Adivar and Karaosmanoglu. However, Adivar had a specific interest in this issue that she referred to as "The Conflict of East and West" and examined it in almost all of her novels.<sup>452</sup> She

---

<sup>450</sup> Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi*, İstanbul 2015, p. 244

<sup>451</sup> Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, İstanbul 2013, p. 349

<sup>452</sup> İnci Enigün has written a book where she solely studies this theme in all of Adivar's novels, titled *Halide Edib Adivar'ın Romanlarında Doğu Batı Katisması*.

searched for the perfect balance between Eastern and Western identities and how to combine the two different worldviews in order to live a modern life without sacrificing moral values

Traditionalism colliding with Westernization, or in Adivar's words, the conflict between East and West, is a major theme in her novels, reflecting the struggles and experiences in her own life.<sup>453</sup> Adivar was born during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and just like *Handan* lost her mother at a very young age, growing up with a series of stepmothers, as well as with her grandmother. One of the main reasons why she was strongly opposed to polygamy was that she witnessed firsthand the misery and distress it caused to women and the family<sup>454</sup>. Another similarity between the author's life and her character's is Adivar's first marriage to Salih Zeki, which is reflected in the marriage between Handan and her tutor Nazim.

Before becoming Adivar's first husband, Salih Zeki was her tutor. He was the one who opened many doors for her and had a vast impact on her education. When she graduated from college in 1901, they married and a new era of work began for Adivar. She helped her husband with his work, doing many translations from English and French to Turkish including works by Shakespeare and Sherlock Holmes and biographies of famous mathematicians. She developed a great interest in French literature and considered Zola to be the "tamer of my soul."<sup>455</sup> They had their first son in 1902 and second in 1904. However, by 1910 the marriage began to break down.

---

<sup>453</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 108

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Adivar, Memoirs of Halide Edib, USA 2005, pp. 208-210

Adivar had been aware of her husband's flirtatious nature and the fact that he had some secrets; however, she had always endured his shortcomings and even overlooked his personal adventures. In 1910, Salih Zeki expressed a serious interest in a young teacher but Adivar, who was fiercely opposed to polygamy, rejected the idea of a second wife. In the hopes of Salih Zeki getting over this idea, she went to stay with her father for some time. However, when she returned home, she found out that Salih Zeki had already married the young teacher.<sup>456</sup> This was the end of their nine-year marriage, as she left her husband with her two children and moved out. The break-up and heartache triggered a nervous breakdown. Adivar stayed in bed for many months.<sup>457</sup>

Handan faces the same issue in the novel bearing her name. Handan's situation, her close relationship to her teacher, Nazim, and her marriage to the crude, flirtatious Husnu Pasha feels like an amalgam of Halide Edib's nine year-long relationship and marriage with Salih Zeki. Just like Halide Edib and Salih Zeki, Handan and Nazim bond on an intellectual level, taking pleasure in one another's minds. However, when Nazim asks Handan's hand in marriage, she feels something is missing because even though their minds are connected, their hearts are not. But as Neriman writes in her letter:

“Nazim's fixation with Handan has grown to the point of madness.

However, Handan's initial overflow of emotions was dying down. Perhaps

---

<sup>456</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 41

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

she loved Nazim very much... But this love lacked something special, that thunder of Handan's heated soul."<sup>458</sup>

When Nazim finally proposed to Handan, after one of their lessons on a Thursday night, he does it by abruptly stating that he wishes to marry her. Instead of asking Handan's father first, as tradition requires, he comes to Handan because, "this marriage will not be like any other marriage, its circumstances are not what any young women would want."<sup>459</sup> He explains that he is "a socialist, a revolutionary" and that marrying him would mean she would have to marry "the cause".<sup>460</sup> He explains this cause as, "Maybe someday big things will happen in this country, and maybe it will be us who will make those big things happen. Maybe fire, blood, smoke and death, lots of death... Will you be one of those who makes fire, blood, smoke and death?"<sup>461</sup>

Handan refuses this proposal, saying that it was missing something, as Nazim is asking her to marry his cause, not himself. Nazim objects but in the end the two part ways. Following this event, Handan abruptly marries Husnu Pasha, an older, wealthy man that she meets a few days after Nazim's proposal. According to Neriman, her "letters from that period do not even sound like the Handan I knew."<sup>462</sup> Neriman continues to assert that the marriage is bizarre, as Handan does not wear a veil or a

---

<sup>458</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 78

<sup>459</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 79

<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

<sup>461</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 80

<sup>462</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 84

wedding dress and is emotionally unwell.<sup>463</sup> A few weeks later they learn that Nazim has been captured and that he's hung himself in prison, with letters addressing Handan in his pockets. After reading the letters, Handan experiences a mental breakdown and becomes very ill. When the doctors of Istanbul fail to make her better, Husnu Pasha takes his wife to Europe.

The dynamics of the relationship between Husnu Pasha and Handan resemble the last period of Halide Edib's marriage to Salih Zeki. The reader finds out that Husnu Pasha has a taste for mistresses, and he does not shy away from stepping out in public with them. His latest mistress is called Mob and she sees herself as the second wife of Husnu Pasha.<sup>464</sup> Over time, the marriage between Handan and Husnu Pasha starts to dissolve and there is not much left behind to fight for. They begin to live apart; Handan moves in with Neriman and Refik Cemal in London, while Husnu Pasha lives in France with his mistresses. Through various letters that Handan pens to Husnu Pasha, the author makes apparent her ideas on marriage and love:

“A marriage is the most sacred and pure thing that connects a man and a woman together and whoever betrays this sacred bond suffers forever, he or she must suffer! Neither a woman, nor a man should have another person in their lives. And if a woman must have a man in her life, it should not be just to fulfill human needs, it should be so these two can become whole and happy by completing each other.”<sup>465</sup>

---

<sup>463</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 85

<sup>464</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 126

<sup>465</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 140

She ends this letter to her husband by stating that he is very far from being that sort of man and she does not post the letter. Instead, she sends him a short note asking if she can join him in Paris. Husnu Pasha's response is bitter and cold. He states that this is not a good idea and that he is enjoying his freedom and does not wish to go back to the fights and regrets of married life. He says he will return to her in the end, when his energy and money runs out and he says he knows Handan is the kind of woman who will wait for her husband no matter what<sup>466</sup>. Then he states his definition of marriage:

“I know that I will be able to get what I want when I extend my hand. So this thing that belongs to me should wait until that happens! What is a marriage? Is it not a need for when a man is old, sick and miserable? Believe me, my money and my strength are running out. I can perhaps continue this life for two more years or maybe even less. And when that time comes, I will be yours again, is that not enough?”<sup>467</sup>

The perpetual cheating, the idea of marriage as a man possessing a woman and the feeling that women have no place in society other than being next to their husbands are all issues the novel *Handan* addresses. As Handan tries to come to terms with her new life, living with her sister Neriman and her husband Refik Cemal, she can no longer tolerate her pain and she experiences a stroke which provokes memory loss. Since Neriman is eight months pregnant at the time, Refik Cemal takes on the responsibility to care for Handan.

---

<sup>466</sup> Adivar, *Handan*, Istanbul 2011, pp. 141-143

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

At this point the reader is aware that Refik Cemal and Handan have developed feelings for each other that neither had expressed or acted upon. Refik Cemal writes about this to his friend Server, and Handan writes about it to Husnu Pasha in her long letters never sent. With her memory loss, the two have an affair, and when her memory returns she realizes what she has done. Handan dies from extreme grief.<sup>468</sup>

The last quarter of the narrative is a portrait of an affair and the turbulence of a young woman in the grasp of losing her mind from all the grief and misfortune she had to experience. Towards the end momentum is lost in terms of ideology and complexity, but this does not diminish it from being a novel with a thesis. The great cast of women demonstrates changing social roles and expectations, while highlighting the impact of these changes on individuals. Such social changes did not come about easily and always require sacrifices, in this case, Handan's life. This is a common narrative style in Adivar's novels, where the female protagonist makes the ultimate sacrifice and dies.<sup>469</sup>

---

<sup>468</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, p. 129

<sup>469</sup> Aliye from *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore) is once again a good example to give here. Aliye, the protagonist of the story, has to face many difficulties throughout the novel: she is an orphan, she moves to a small rural village from the city, she, as a young modern woman with principles, has to go against the backwardness of the villagers. All throughout the story she has to fight: fight for her adoptive family in the village, fight for the man she loves and fight against the group of men who want to harm her. These men are a peculiar group: a Greek soldier of the occupying forces, a wealthy elderly man from the village, who wants to marry her, and the imam who believes her mere existence is offensive. And although Aliye puts up an extraordinary fight where she never veers away from her rigorous path, in the end she is beaten to death at the village center by a group of men led by the imam. Her sacrifice feels almost inevitable, which makes the following point: to instill a deep sociological change and to win a war, to win this war both against the outside forces and the forces

Women usually lead the way for change, and sometimes, for a society or a nation to change, sacrifices have to be made. Men usually make these sacrifices on the battlefield, or in the context of government, such as in the novel *Kiralik Konak* (A Mansion for Rent), or as portrayed by Nazim in *Handan*. Women, however, fight for their rights and social status within their families, and sometimes, within their social circles or their communities.

In *Handan*, one of the major themes is marriage and women's inferior status within that institution. We see two generations who have a very different approach to certain questions; at which age should a woman get married, for instance, and what should occupy a young single girl's mind? Handan's stepmother and Neriman's aunt have a very different opinion than Handan and Neriman:

“When we talked to my aunt about Handan and her life in Maltepe, my aunt would always come back to the same topic of marriage. I would say,  
- Handan just turned seventeen. Her education is not complete yet; she should at least be twenty to get married.

To this, she would angrily reply,

- What does it mean to complete an education for a girl? She knows a few languages, it is not like she will become a clerk! It is even more bizarre that she does not wish for a husband at her age; time will fly by, is it appropriate to get married at twenty? I got married at fourteen, your

---

from the within, great sacrifice has to be made. Aliye, as a smart, idealist young woman, an indication of the kind of Turkey to be born, has to put everything on the line, and even give her life willingly.



grandma at twelve. My poor mother had to get married six months older than I was!

We used to laugh with Handan at these old ladies and their obsession with marriage at an early age. [...] My aunt once said,

- I have no doubt that she is just as smart as a man, it is not intellect that she is missing. My fear is, it will be these traits that separate her from other girls which will result in her not finding a husband. She is not even pretty enough to overlook these crazy ways!”<sup>470</sup>

When Handan gets married to Husnu Pasha, her stepmother is the only person in the household that is happy about this nuptial.<sup>471</sup> The unwillingness of the young generation towards finding a husband and getting married, and prioritizing education over marriage, is one of the main differences between generations as highlighted by Adivar. In her novels, women protagonists are usually either teachers themselves, such as Aliye of *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore) or Lale of *Tatarcik*, or they highly value education and, like Handan, hope to share knowledge.

Ayşe Durakbas, in her book titled *Halide Edib: Turkish Modernism and Feminism*, states that feminism advocates for women to take part in various social roles and functions.<sup>472</sup> It is a modernist movement that promotes women to be equally able to

---

<sup>470</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, pp. 68-69.

<sup>471</sup> Adivar, Handan, Istanbul 2011, pp. 86.

<sup>472</sup> Durakbas, Halide Edib: Turk Modernlesmesi ve Feminizm, Istanbul 2012, p. 53

participate in all aspects of life, fighting traditionalism which socially limits women.<sup>473</sup> She goes on to write that:

“The utopia and the ideals Halide Edib had for the Turkish nation and the Turkish women were in unison with the air of Turkish nationalism of this era. Within Turkish nationalism, Turkish women, as hard working as Turkish men, were at the core of Turkish national identity. This image replaced the image of the Ottoman Empire’s luxurious and parasitic upper-class harem women, who spent their days idly. Within the Orientalist writings of the West, the women of the harem came to represent the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, it was vital for nationalists to create the counter-identity of the authentic, hard-working Turkish women. While a strong Turkish nationalism was flourishing, this new identity for women was not just a defense against the West, it was also suggesting a new model against conservative femininity within the Ottoman-Turk society.”<sup>474</sup>

From Turkey’s perspective, one cannot discuss World War I, the Turkish Independence War and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey without talking about Adivar, her literature and her contribution to the re-construction of Turkish national and cultural identity. She was a Turkish nationalist and she wanted a society and state formed on the basis of national elements. Nevertheless, she believed that this could only happen with a specifically historicist approach. Unlike some of her contemporaries who believed that the only way to salvation was to cut ties with the

---

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> Durakbasa, Halide Edib: Turk Modernlesmesi ve Feminizm, Istanbul 2012, p. 195

Ottoman past and start anew, her approach was based on an intention to form a sentimental liaison between a concrete and historically realistic Ottoman past and the present times. Adivar was not in favor of a revolutionary national imagination, preferring instead an evolutionary romantic historicism that would have activated and developed existing society.<sup>475</sup>

Adivar's national historicism was an attempt to establish a sentimental tie between the past and the present, but at the same time this conceptual romanticism did not prevent her from taking practical action focused on practical results. In comparison to many of her male intellectual contemporaries, Adivar was more productive. She worked with the aim of educating the common people and in particular women and children, because she believed that only an educated society was capable of development. She participated in educational projects both before and during the war. She approached the common people and tried to understand them; in general, her approach gave precedence to understanding an agreement on common ground.<sup>476</sup>

*Yaprak Dokumu*, on the other hand, is a story of conflicting ideologies. The first scene where we see Ali Riza Bey's ex-colleague during office lunch break arguing with him about acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Ali Riza Bey is old and set in his ways, while this young ex-colleague states that:

“People today are not the people from your time... They have opened their eyes and this made them more ambitious. No one is satisfied by their circumstances anymore. Considering this situation, how could

---

<sup>475</sup> Koroglu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, New York 2007, pp. 152-153.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

you expect that the old moral values would stay intact and not evolve?”<sup>477</sup>

*Yaprak Dokumu* is not a story that explores whether there would be a change in society or not. It is expressed from the start that there will be a vast change in society and the novel is primarily concerned with how this change comes about and its aftermath. It examines what happens when traditionalism of the older generation collides with the modernism of the young. The education and values Ali Riza Bey gives his children belong to another time, thus they are not applicable to the period his children live in.<sup>478</sup> The traditions he is used to are no longer valued by their children, who have no other elderly figure to teach them values applicable for their own times, times that are uncharted territory for everyone. The new period of Westernization was foreign, and Turkish literature shows that while there will be some who could educate themselves to a point to achieve the balance between Eastern values and Western modernism, most misinterpreted Westernization and lead miserable lives as a result.

One of the themes where this collision between traditionalism and Westernization is most apparent in the novel is marriage. Marriage is a highly traditional institution that is closely related to national, cultural and religious identity. According to Ottoman customs, heavily influenced by Islamic traditions, marriage occurred by arrangement among families for most girls in their later teenage years.<sup>479</sup> Ali Riza Bey himself had

---

<sup>477</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 10

<sup>478</sup> Hayber, Halide Edip, *Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismalari*, Istanbul 1993, p. 362

<sup>479</sup> Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*, USA 2010, p. 67

married according to *görücü*<sup>480</sup> traditions when one night a close friend of his, “offered him to marry one of his relatives and Ali Riza Bey was too ashamed to refuse so he agreed.”<sup>481</sup> A parallel can be drawn between Ali Riza Bey’s approach to marriage and that of Naim Efendi from *Kiralik Konak* who also believes that his granddaughter’s approach to men and marriage is wrong. The fact that Seniha rejects the *görücü* tradition and wishes to flirt with the men she might consider marrying is a fact that Naim Efendi finds impossible to comprehend. If a man and woman saw each other before their first night as a married couple, Naim Efendi believes that this marriage cannot be valid.<sup>482</sup>

Just like Ali Riza Efendi, Naim Efendi also has to get used to seeing old traditions die and replaced by new, Western traditions:

“Naim Efendi was a bigoted man; he had already given up on the ways of *haremlik* and *selamlık*. He was now used to seeing Seniha and his daughter unveiled among men. However, some new traditions he did not find pleasing. Alas, these new ways of getting married was unpleasant and outrageous.”<sup>483</sup>

In both of these novels, marriage is presented as the institution which women choose to rebel against. Seniha, Leyla and Necla reject the older traditions in the ways that they socialize, dress and talk back to their elders; however, marriage is where they

---

<sup>480</sup> *trans.* Arranged marriage

<sup>481</sup> Guntekin, Yaprak Dokumu, Istanbul 2016, p. 12

<sup>482</sup> Karaosmanoglu, Kiralik Konak, Istanbul 2013, p. 42

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

make their biggest rupture from tradition. At this point it is important to examine why both writers have chosen marriage as an example in order to demonstrate the departure from tradition and how Westernization, if misinterpreted, leads to degeneration.

If family is the smallest unit in society, but also its building block, then perhaps marriage is the institution that enables the family unit to exist. In Turkish novels, from Tanzimat period to the early years of the Republic, it is apparent that marriage was considered as something the elders of the family decided for the younger generations, thus making it a family affair.<sup>484</sup> Given that both novels concern themselves with the collapse of the family unit, it is then no surprise that they look for reasons for this collapse. Both Karaosmanoglu and Guntekin agree that the generation gap was caused by a departure from traditions as well as misinterpretation of Westernism, which shakes the family unit to its core. However, they also seem to agree that a woman's new approach to relationships and marriage is also one of the main reasons that family unit is in danger. Marriage, after all, is an arrangement upon which the family is built and women having more say in this arrangement is perceived as a dangerous notion to both male writers.

Although reforms regarding women's education, civil rights and politics were to some extent supported by intellectuals; they remained a major topic of debate when it came to marriage and women's role in marriage, as well as what is and is not appropriate behavior for women with the opposite sex. The Westernization processes that began during the Tanzimat period finally got women out of the house and encouraged them

---

<sup>484</sup> Esen, *Modern Turk Edebiyatı Uzerine Okumalar*, Istanbul 2006, p. 203

to join social life. However, this came at a cost: women being sexualized and losing their role as holy mothers, wives and sisters. This became a serious concern.<sup>485</sup> While male authors seemed to have a more stern idea, Adivar, for example, took a different view. As a woman who had experience with polygamy, divorce and the choosing of her own spouse, she examined marriage and relationships uniquely from a female perspective. This subject will be discussed in the next chapter at length.

In the end, none of Ali Riza Bey's children end up happily married or in happy relationships; even his own marriage is destroyed. Fikret, the eldest daughter, who is the less physically attractive yet the most virtuous amongst them, ends up marrying a man in his fifties who has lost his wife a year prior and has three children. Fikret moves to Adapazari<sup>486</sup>, which seems more like an escape for her as she does not approve of her mother's and sisters' way of living but who also feels resentful towards her father for letting this happen to their family.

Fikret ends up being unhappy in her marriage, she is repressed in the house and lives like a maid, devoting her life to taking care of her husband and his three children. Sevket, on the other hand, steals money from the bank he works at, is found guilty and gets sentenced to eighteen months of prison. His wife leaves him immediately after stating that she cannot stand the poverty any longer, and for Sevket this is his "salvation".<sup>487</sup>

---

<sup>485</sup> Gulendam, *Türk Romanında Kadın Kimliği: 1946-1960*, Konya 2006, p. 229

<sup>486</sup> A city not too far from Istanbul.

<sup>487</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, p. 119

However, the worst ending was constructed for Leyla and Necla. Necla is very unhappily married in Syria, a wife to a man with two other wives and half a dozen children. Although she continuously writes to her father and begs him to save her, Ali Riza Bey does not help and tells her that this is her life now and she should stay in Syria with her family. Ayse becomes a mistress to a wealthy lawyer who has rented her a nice apartment in Taksim. When Ali Riza Bey finds out about this he has a stroke, which leaves him with a speech impediment and difficulties in walking. He throws Ayse out of the house. Hayri Hanim insists that they should see Leyla, but Ali Riza Bey does not agree, and when Ayse comes back to the house, this time he leaves. First he goes to Fikriye to Adapazari, but Fikriye is struggling in an unhappy marriage, living in a small house with her mother and sister in laws and a number of stepchildren. Ali Riza Bey can only stay with Fikriye for fifteen days and then returns to Istanbul. He doesn't go back to his old house, but instead stays on the streets for a few days and falls ill. When Hayriye Hanim, Leyla and Ayse find him at the hospital, unable to talk, very thin and ill, he does not have the strength to fight back anymore and they take him back to Leyla's apartment in Taksim.

The last chapter is entitled "Netice"<sup>488</sup> and it only lasts for two pages.<sup>489</sup> Guntekin uses a very detached, almost emotionless voice to conclude the tragic end of Ali Riza Bey and it almost feels rushed. After moving into a spare room in Leyla's apartment, with good food and much rest he regains his strength and begins to limp around the apartment. He spends his days trying to teach Leyla's parrot new words, even though he cannot really talk properly himself. Leyla is still having her dinner parties and

---

<sup>488</sup> *trans.* Conclusion, Result

<sup>489</sup> Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu*, Istanbul 2016, pp. 150-160



every so often Ali Riza Bey joins as well, even doing some funny dance moves to entertain the guests.

It is interesting that in the end, Guntekin decided to silence Ali Riza Bey by taking his ability to speak. The behavior Guntekin describes in the last chapter, such as talking to parents and dancing for the guests suggests that he is not really himself anymore. He lost his identity as well as his voice. *Yaprak Dokumu* takes place during the last period of the Ottoman Empire and the first years of the new Republic and it reflects all the struggles of this transitional period through the eyes of a middle class family. It can be argued that Guntekin specifically focuses on the negative aspects of this change and he questions the values and traditions of the older generation, as well as what would happen to them through Ali Riza Bey who represents the characteristics of a “traditional type” of man.<sup>490</sup> On the other hand, it can also be argued that Hayriye Hanim, Leyla and Necla represent the misinterpretation of Westernization,<sup>491</sup> or in other words, the catastrophic results that would be caused by Westernization when there is lack of foundation, education and a stronger understanding of culture.<sup>492</sup>

## Conclusion

According to Adivar, there are some distinctive borders between Eastern and Western cultures. The East has more spiritual values while the West has a more materialistic

---

<sup>490</sup> Erdogan, “Resat Nuri Guntekin’in “Yaprak Dokumu” Adli Romaninda Degismenin Sosyo-Kulturel Boyutlari”, *Istanbul Universitesi Sosyoloji Konferanslari Dergisi*, No: 31 2005, p. 202

<sup>491</sup> Enigun, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati*, Istanbul 2013, p. 288

<sup>492</sup> Erdogan, “Resat Nuri Guntekin’in “Yaprak Dokumu” Adli Romaninda Degismenin Sosyo-Kulturel Boyutlari”, *Istanbul Universitesi Sosyoloji Konferanslari Dergisi*, No: 31 2005, p. 203

mindset. She suggests that one is not better than the other and a human being cannot survive solely with spiritual values or materials, therefore a well-balanced portion of each culture would be the ultimate goal when rebuilding a new national and cultural identity. However, this was not an easy task since, for the Turkish people, Eastern values had strong roots of over six hundred years. Therefore, when the Westernization process took place in a short time span, the intellectuals of this period predicted the outcome would be conflictual. Almost no author saw any hope for the oldest generation who they considered was doomed to die in a world they no longer understood the meaning of. And authors saw two outcomes for the youngest generation that was growing up within the new Republic. They would either achieve the perfect balance of Eastern values and Western education, or they would adapt to Westernization in the most superficial way imaginable, causing great decay and degeneration in their character. Therefore, it can be argued that literature had two vital functions during this time: to give a warning for the worst-case scenario and to set an example as to what to aspire towards.

## **Chapter 5: Literature and the New Turkish Women**

### **Introduction**

The reforms that took place after the Revolution immensely affected women. They targeted polygamy in marriage, adopted the inheritance law, allowed women to join the workforce, granted them rights to education and the right to be elected.

In the previous chapters, the evolution of women's new social roles as mothers, wives, daughters; in brief, as members of the new society have been examined. This chapter aims to analyze the journey women went through, beginning with the Young Turk Revolution to the early years of the new Republic and how women contributed to as well as dealt with the Westernization process in Turkey. The emergence of feminism and the Turkish women's struggle to combine Eastern traditions with Western modernism will also be examined.

According to Yuval-Davis, "Third-World women" have suffered from a Western approach that fabricated them only on barbaric customs and subjugation, without considering the social and economic circumstances that shaped their existence.<sup>493</sup> In a way, literature has been a tool to explain these circumstances, and women's struggle to free themselves from them. Women have been a dominant subject in Turkish literature since the 1908 Young Turk revolution. This trend continued through World War I and the War of Independence and especially during the first years of the new Republic. Turkish women became the symbol of modernization. Reforms made in clothing, access to education, new legal rights protecting women such as inheritance and the right to divorce as well as women's increasing presence in the workforce and public space rendered them the representatives of change.

---

<sup>493</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, London 2008, p. 118

Although these developments were well reflected in literature, female characters differed in nature from one author to another. In some cases, these represented the modern, educated, enthusiastic women who were not satisfied with their roles as housewives and were eager to work and educate those around them. In other cases, women could be portrayed as solely superficially adopting various aspects of modernization such as going out to the extravagant dinner parties, dressing provocatively and admiring money.

Both interpretations depicted a type of woman that was a product of its time. However, while Halide Edip Adivar prioritized women who were smart, educated and determined, it can be argued that her contemporary male writers portrayed women as leading to the decay of society because of their misinterpretation of modernism. In order to explore these questions, this chapter will focus on one of Adivar's most renowned novels, *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore).

Perhaps one of the biggest discussion points in the literature during this time of change was the reconstruction of the female identity. To what extent should women be a part of westernization? What's the desirable balance between Eastern values and Western modernism for women? What should be the role of women in family, society or politics? These questions were highly debated and various scenarios of good and bad outcomes were presented to the readers.

## **Westernization and its Perception: Perfection and the Degeneration of Female Identity in Turkish Literature**

Debates about women's issues began largely after the establishment of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908. This was simply due to the Empire's aim to Westernize.<sup>494</sup> The intellectuals of the era discussed what the new and evolving role of women in society should be and the period saw the emergence of many publications by women and the proliferation of women's societies. And while Atatürk's role has been immense in revolutionizing women's lives, it would be unfair to assume that women did not fight for their rights.

The fact is that women had to earn their rights through hard work and sacrifice. In a speech published in the *Mektep Muzesi* magazine in 1913, Adivar stressed that although we cannot talk about a long history of women's movement in the Ottoman empire, this does not mean that the women's movement did not exist. Women endeavoured towards their emancipation right then and there.<sup>495</sup> Therefore, it is imperative to consider the women's movement prior to 1908 in order to get a better understanding of the foundations of the new identity of modern Turkish women.

According to Serpil Cakir, a historian of women's movements and feminism in the Ottoman empire, the latter underwent an important structural transformation in social, economic, educational and legal domains during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This, also, inevitably influenced the lives of Ottoman women, in parallel with the aim of modernization. The women's own publications at the time illustrate the progress

---

<sup>494</sup> Kurnaz, *Osmanlı Kadınının Yükselişi: 1908-1918*, İstanbul 2013, p. 29

<sup>495</sup> Cakir, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, İstanbul 2013, p. 21

made for women to channel their ideas publicly.<sup>496</sup> The publications not only show how the transformation came to take place and grew, but it also influenced this very transformation process itself. Cakir highlights that the media was the channel through which the Ottoman woman introduced herself, her thoughts and issues to the main public for the very first time.<sup>497</sup>

The first publication to give a voice to women was called *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, published during 1869-1870 by Ali Rasit. The magazine published letters from women, usually signed by a pseudonym or in vague terms such as “A fine lady from Uskudar”. These letters drew attention to the lack of education and facilities for women as well as women’s willingness to participate in public life.<sup>498</sup> Another publication that targeted women audiences was *Vakid yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat* (1875), with a stated core principle: “Talking about things that are of value to women”.<sup>499</sup> However, it took a while for women to really start publishing in these magazines.

In *Insaniyet* magazine, published in 1883, a letter to a magazine signed as “Mektepli Kiz” demanded that these so-called women’s magazines should let women write for them as well. In the following years, there was a rise in women’s signatures in such publications.

The publications that stretch from the second constitutional era to the beginning of World War I covered a wide range of subjects regarding managing a family, raising

---

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> Cakir, *Osmanli Kadin Hareketi*, Istanbul 2013, p. 61

<sup>499</sup> Cakir, *Osmanli Kadin Hareketi* (Istanbul 2013, p. 63

children, cooking, baking and house maintenance. However, they also became a platform for debate about women questioning their place in society compared to men.<sup>500</sup> A good example for this could be the article written by Fatma Aliye for *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (The Newspaper for Women). This magazine was especially important amongst the publications of this period. It was published between the years 1895 to 1908, first twice a week, then weekly for thirteen years, making it the longest women's magazine to be published during this time. Its writers were mainly women and its mission was to “educate a generation”.<sup>501</sup>

Born in Istanbul in 1862, Fatma Aliye was a poignant figure in the history of Turkish women. The views she expressed through her writings signaled a change in the cultural identity of women. Her first novel *Muhadarat* was published in 1892 under her own name.<sup>502</sup> Aliye believed that, in domains of science and art, men had created obstacles for women, and that Muslim women were unaware of their identity and history, which was filled with female accomplishments.<sup>503</sup> As an ardent defender of an Islamic identity, Aliye, on the other hand, suggested that this should not prevent women from joining the workforce of the country, sharing public space equally with men and expressing their opinions freely.

---

<sup>500</sup> Cakir, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, İstanbul 2013, p. 69

<sup>501</sup> For *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* archives please see Beyazıt Kutuphanesi Arsivi, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi.

<sup>502</sup> <http://www.istanbulkadınmuzesi.org/fatma-aliye-hanim-topuz>

<sup>503</sup> Cakir, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, İstanbul 2013, p. 59

When the Second Constitutional Era began, one of the dominant debates about women was education,<sup>504</sup> especially regarding the question of whether or not women should receive a more Westernized education. Under the influence of her *ulema* father, Fatma Aliye supported the traditionalist education system for women, suggesting that it was more important for women to learn about their own history and roots, rather than the history of, say, France.<sup>505</sup> However, when it came to women joining the workforce, Fatma Aliye was a strong advocate of women finding a role in production instead of consumption. Aliye suggested that when left idle, women can turn to gossip and vice; however, having a job can cure what she considered a malady of the female condition as well as tackle other issues such as poverty.<sup>506</sup>

Another important example of these publications would be *Kadin* (Woman) magazine, published in Salonika between 1908 and 1909 for a total of thirty issues. In its first issue, *Kadin* stated its *raison d'être* as, “Among the serial and non-serial publications, there was a devastating void: a magazine for women.”<sup>507</sup> The magazine mainly advocated more socially active and education women. It was also concerned with the unjust circumstances of women and highlighted this issue by using examples from the West as comparison.

---

<sup>504</sup> S. Karaca, “Fatma Aliye Hanım’ın Türk Kadın Haklarının Düşünsel Temellerine Katkıları”, *Karadeniz Arastirmalari Dergisi*, Guz 2011, Sayı 31, p. 98.

<sup>505</sup> S. Karaca, “Fatma Aliye Hanım’ın Türk Kadın Haklarının Düşünsel Temellerine Katkıları”, *Karadeniz Arastirmalari Dergisi*, Guz 2011, Sayı 31, p. 99.

<sup>506</sup> F. Aliye, “Terbiye-i İçtimaiye”, *Mehasin*, S. 10, Eylül 1325b, pp. 740-741.

<sup>507</sup> “İfade-i Mahsusa”, *Kadin*, 13 Tesrin-i Evel 1324, no. 1, pp. 1-3.



Before the establishment of the new Republic, there were approximately forty periodical publications (women's magazines) written and published by women.<sup>508</sup>

Apart from *Kadin* magazine, several other women's magazines were published during the second constitutional era including *Kadinlar Dunyasi*, *Musavver Kadin*, *Kadinlik*, *Siyanet*, *Seyyale*, *Hanimlar Alemleri*, *Kadin Duygusu*, *Inci*, *Kadinlar Saltanati*, *Turk Kadini*, *Hanim*, *Kadinlik Hayati*, *Ev Hocası* and *Firuze*. Perhaps one of the most influential one of its time was *Kadinlar Dunyasi* (World of Women), published in Istanbul between 1913 and 1921. The magazine's writers consisted exclusively of women and it was owned by Nuriye Ulviye Mevlan Civelek (1893-1964), who became the first woman to publish the Ottoman Empire's first feminist magazine.<sup>509</sup>

In addition to education and joining the workforce, the Second Constitutional Era established legal reforms. Polygamy stood at around 10 per cent and this mainly consisted of a man being married to two women. Divorce was particularly high, around 70 per cent; nevertheless, it should be pointed out that these numbers reflect the reality of larger cities rather than rural areas.<sup>510</sup> The real change occurred in 1917, when the *Aile Hukuku Kararnamesi* (the new family law issued by the government) was put in place. Important figures such as Ziya Gokalp, Ahmet Suayb, Ibrahim Hakki and Ahmet Cevdet have contributed in the writing of this law.<sup>511</sup>

According to the family reform legislation, men were only permitted to marry a second wife with the first wife's consent, and any marriage that was made without the

---

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> <http://www.istanbulkadinmuzesi.org/nuriye-ulviye-mevlan-civelek>

<sup>510</sup> Kurnaz, Osmanli Kadininin Yukselisi: 1908-1918, Istanbul 2013, p. 144

<sup>511</sup> Kurnaz, Osmanli Kadininin Yukselisi: 1908-1918, Istanbul 2013, pp. 145-146.

government's consent would not be legal. The age of marriage was seventeen and eighteen for women and men, respectively. The right to divorce was granted to women under certain circumstances occurred after the wedding, such as physical or mental illness in men, or if the man was unable to provide, or if there was severe conflict between spouses. Interestingly, this new legislation caused conflict amongst women themselves, who debated whether such reforms were compatible with Islamic culture.<sup>512</sup>

Women's activities were not limited to publications. Women's organizations also evolved during the second constitutional era. These organizations aimed to improve women's lives and used the periodical publications to spread their ideas to a wider audience.<sup>513</sup> The aim of these groups was primarily to help women in poverty and in desperation. But over time this aim evolved into something more substantial. As they grew, women's organizations aimed to educate women to help them join the workforce and to inform them about politics, feminism and to look for solutions to the country's growing problems.<sup>514</sup>

The organization *Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti*, for example, was founded by Adivar and her associates in May 28, 1913.<sup>515</sup> Proficient Turkish was a condition to become a member of the organization, in addition to mandatory English lessons. The organization's aim was to raise women without making them compromise on their

---

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> Cakir, *Osmanli Kadin Hareketi*, Istanbul 2013, p. 87

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Zeki, "Bizde Hareket-i Nisvan", *Nevsal-i Milli* 1332, pp. 343-52.

traditions. It provided elementary level Turkish and English education, alongside regular conferences destined to women.<sup>516</sup>

The Young Turk revolution and the reforms of the second constitutional era undeniably laid a concrete groundwork for the later Republican reforms. That being said, it is also important to underline that the group that benefited most from this expansion was largely middle-class women. The rural heartland of Anatolia as well as the urban working classes did not necessarily see the immediate benefit of these reforms as much as middle-class women in larger cities.

It is in this context that Adivar's *Vurun Kahpeye* stands out as an important literary work. Published in 1923, the year the new Republic was established, the novel served a dual purpose: portraying the women's struggle to construct an ideal identity and showing aspects of the national struggle and the transition from an Islamic to a Western culture.

The issue surrounding women's rights and roles in society had occupied the minds of Ottoman intellectuals during the *Tanzimat* period (1838-1876), and this turned into an ideological battlefield during the final years of the Empire for those who supported the "Islamic revivalism" and those who advocated Westernization.<sup>517</sup> These questions were mainly put in the background during World War I, but following the Turkish War of Independence, it drew a nationalistic united portrait of women and men, for the sake of the country's independence. However, after the establishment of the new Republic the question of women rose again and the novelty of the new Republic was

---

<sup>516</sup> Cakir, *Osmanli Kadin Hareketi*, Istanbul 2013, p. 97

<sup>517</sup> Yosmaoglu, *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World*, Wisconsin 2007, p. 214

obliged to resolve this dispute by placing women themselves in the public eye and accorded them rights that would ensure their loyalty to the young Republic.<sup>518</sup>

Ziya Gokalp played a crucial role in advocating legal reforms in order to provide equal positions for women in marriage and inheritance. He also advocated educational reforms to give them a chance to secure the same kind of secular education as men, as well as social and economical reforms to allow them full and equal participation in social and economical life.<sup>519</sup> This advocacy soon proved to be fruitful, as elementary and middle education for girls was greatly expanded by the Ministry of Education, and women were admitted to high schools. Trade schools for women were also established to give them training so that they could earn a living as secretaries and nurses. City women began to work in public, not only in textile and tobacco factories, but also in the opening of businesses and stores.<sup>520</sup>

Also, shortly after the establishment of the Republic, many reforms were put into place that, if not directly affected women, revolutionized the way women led their lives. With the Civil Law going into effect on 4 October 1926, polygamy became illegal, and men could marry only one woman, which changed the perception of family within society. The same law also regulated the right to divorce. This was a reform that touched Adivar's heart closely. Following her mother's death, her father had been married multiple times. When Adivar's own husband married another woman without her consent, Adivar was able to file a divorce despite her love for her husband. Polygamy was unacceptable:

---

<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II*, UK 2002, p.307

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

“In 1910, I was having serious domestic trouble. [...] Salih Zeki Bey’s relation with and attachment to a teacher looked serious enough to make it seem conceivable that he contemplated marriage. A believer in monogamy, in the inviolability of name and home, I felt it to be my duty to retire from what I had believed would be my home to the end of my life.[...] To my great surprise he [Salih Zeki Bey] added that polygamy was necessary in some cases, and he asked me to continue as his first wife. There was a long and painful struggle between us, but at last he consented to a divorce.”<sup>521</sup>

Adivar published a novel in 1910, entitled *Seviye Talip*, that tackled polygamy and divorce. Based on Adivar’s own impressions from her stay in England in the aftermath of the 31 March incident, the novel draws comparisons between England Turkey,<sup>522</sup> and was highly criticized for its approach.<sup>523</sup>

The novel circles around three characters: a man, raised with Western education and ideals, and two women with divergent views on Westernism. The male character, Fahir, marries the daughter of his aunt, Macide, who is conservative and raised according to Eastern traditions. The reader sees Macide as controversial. On the one hand, she tries hard to become the modern woman her husband wishes her to be while, on the other, she is unable to escape her mother’s repression. Fahir eventually transforms his wife, piece by piece, starting with her clothing, then attending events

---

<sup>521</sup> Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, USA 2005, pp. 307-8.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Enigun, *Halide Edib Adivar’in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi*, Istanbul 2007, p. 89

where men and women are entertained together and finally freeing her from her mother's oppression. Meanwhile, one day Fahri runs into his childhood friend Seviye.

Seviye is a character that does not fit well with her times and surroundings, that is, pre-1910 Istanbul. Seviye does not get along with her husband and falls for her piano teacher, Cemal. However, Seviye's husband refuses to divorce her so she leaves him and starts living with Cemal out of wedlock. When Fahir meets Seviye, he falls in love with her and the novel chronicles Fahir's undying, yet impossible love for Seviye.

When it was first published, *Seviye Talip* was a topic of controversy.<sup>524</sup> Just like its protagonist, the novel was perhaps ahead of its time and it focused on issues that were not yet on the general public's radar. Some of the ideas that were mentioned in this short novella developed into main concepts that later became the backbone of Adivar's literature. These themes include women who were a step ahead in Westernizing, but do not fit in with their surrounding, as well as women who do not accept being stuck in an unhappy marriage. Another theme that *Seviye Talip* touches upon is the state of women who struggle between Westernization and traditionalism. In *Seviye Talip*, this demonstrates itself in Macide's character. The novella is narrated through Fahir's perspective who explains Macide and Macide's "class" as such:

"They are a very certain class of women: only literate enough to be able to read the paper and write letters; and offer the rest of their time into the household. The most natural thing for them is to knit, clean around the house, make sure everything is in order and there is no mess in the house.

---

<sup>524</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 89

[...] While you speak to them about your ideas, their suspicious eyes are searching for dusts on the console.”<sup>525</sup>

Adivar’s stay in England and her exposure to British culture appears to have had a significant influence on how she regarded women as Macide. This is apparent from the story. Fahir feels trapped in his marriage to Macide and takes off to England for three years to study philosophy. He comes back after the declaration of *Mesrutiyet* in 1876, a period of constitutional monarchy put in effect by Abdulhamid II, and it is only after his return that he decides to change and westernize his wife. But it is also interesting how Adivar views marriage and divorce, even as far back as 1910. In the novel, it is highlighted that Seviye finds it more dignified to live out of wedlock with the man she truly loves than to stay with a man she is not happy with, solely because he refuses to divorce.<sup>526</sup>

The question of morality when it comes to women—their marital status, their ways of socializing and dressing—made for a vast debate in literature in Turkey during the time of transition. However, Adivar joined the debate as early as 1910, perhaps even pioneering it radically. *Seviye Talip* is an intriguing novel, not just for the issues it tackles but also how directly and unapologetically it addresses them. Adivar portrays a woman struggling to keep up with her husband’s demands to Westernize, but also a woman who is already modern and Western in her thinking, without the need to be educated by a man. Seviye is an interesting character because she is already seeking her rights and questioning the society she lives in.

---

<sup>525</sup> Adivar, *Seviye Talip*, Istanbul 1977, p.12

<sup>526</sup> Adivar, *Seviye Talip*, Istanbul 1977, pp.45-46

The reforms on clothing and outfit, the right to elect and be elected, and the agenda to make women the new face of education, changed the way women lived, at least in theory. However, these reforms took place in a short time span and therefore also needed the support of the intellectuals as the leaders and shapers of public opinion. Ziya Gokalp was one of the first to articulate women's new role in the new Republic. He argued that the subordination of women in Ottoman society was not innate to the roots of Turkish culture. According to him, the association of Islam with patriarchal institutions such as polygamy and veiling stemmed from "outside" influences and degenerated "pure" religion.<sup>527</sup> Therefore, Gokalp argues, it was necessary to justify women's rights by tracing the roots of the Turkish nation back to the times predating the corrupting influence of Persian and Byzantine civilizations, to its origins in Central Asia.

After the establishment of the new Republic, the relationship between state ideology and women's organizations was laden with implicit tension, emanating from the troubled coupling of women's activism and modesty as the basis of their new identity.<sup>528</sup> The founder of the first Turkish Women's League in 1924 was Nezihe Muhiddin and the organization began to publish a bi-weekly periodical titled *Türk Kadın Yolu* (Turkish Women's Path) in 1925. The aim of the publication to propagate their cause. Muhiddin wrote articles stating that intelligent women were deprived of, among other things, education and full political rights.<sup>529</sup>

---

<sup>527</sup> Yosmaoglu, *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World*, Wisconsin 2007, p. 215.

<sup>528</sup> Yosmaoglu, *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World*, Wisconsin 2007, pp. 216-217

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.



Ataturk himself had to fight against strong prejudices against women and their rights. The passing of the laws in the Grand National Assembly was a difficult task, but changing the perception of the public towards women was perhaps even a harder task to accomplish. In 1925, Ataturk visited Izmir where he hosted the first Turkish ball.<sup>530</sup> The guests were Muslims and their wives were also invited. The orchestra played Western music and the guests were expected to dance together. Even though Ataturk himself had opened the ball by performing a dance with the governor's daughter, the guests were reluctant to follow suit. Until this moment, a Turkish woman had never danced with a man in her country.<sup>531</sup> In many ways, Ataturk had to lead the way himself to set an example for the new social changes. Within five years women were given the vote at the municipal level.

The women's movement was also largely led by one of Gokalp's most distinguished followers: Adivar.<sup>532</sup> She argued that two important measures were passed with regard to women in society under the Republican regime:

“A new civil code has been promulgated which abolishes polygamy, equalizes inheritance and entrusts the right to divorce to a court. This is a copy of the Swiss Civil Code. Secondly, women have been given the municipal vote and are eligible to the councils. There are important provincial towns with women members at the moment.”<sup>533</sup>

---

<sup>530</sup> Kinkross, Ataturk: The Rebirth of a Nation, London 2001, p. 420

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Shaw & Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II, UK 2002, p.307

<sup>533</sup> Adivar, Conflict of East and West in Turkey, Delhi 2012, p. 223

Shortly after Adivar delivered this lecture, women were granted political suffrage. In fact, women were accorded full political rights in two stages: first came the license to participate in local elections in April 1930 and then came the approval in April 1935 of the right to run and vote in national elections. With the support of Ataturk, seventeen women were elected deputies to the Grand National Assembly.<sup>534</sup> Right after the approval of the bill, *Türk Kadın Yolu* disbanded itself on the grounds that it had completed its historical mission.<sup>535</sup>

Adivar was one of the key figures contributing to the reconstruction of identity of women in the new Republic. In a lecture she gave at the New Delhi University entitled “Turkish Women”, Adivar said:

“Since Nature appointed the mother to create the family, and since aggregations of families have inevitably grown into nations, Nature also endowed woman with two seemingly incompatible characteristics, extreme conservatism and extreme revolutionism.”<sup>536</sup>

Adivar did not subscribe to the idea that one needs to avoid religion and faith in order to become modern or secular; on the contrary, she advocated that Western modernizations and Islam could be brought together to create the perfect balance. For Islam’s perspective on women, Adivar adopts a view that could be considered as bias; she almost interprets historic events to fit her description of the perfect identity for women. This runs parallel to the inclination in the intellectuals’ circle during this time period. The reconstruction of the Turkish national identity, secular and modern,

---

<sup>534</sup> Kinross, Ataturk: The Rebirth of a Nation, London 2001, p. 421

<sup>535</sup> Yosmaoglu, Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World, Wisconsin 2007, p. 217

<sup>536</sup> Adivar, Conflict of East and West in Turkey, Delhi 2012, p. 194

required a narrative that was distinctively separate from that of the Ottoman identity. For this, the intellectuals had to look even further than the Empire's six hundred year old history, to the 'ancestors' of the Turks. The language reform was based on the Sun Language theory, where it was proposed that all human languages are descendants of one proto-Turkic primal language.<sup>537</sup> Atatürk relied on this theory to make the transition from Arabic script to Latin an easier process.

Adivar's idea of the perfect Turkish woman, faithful, morally strong, traditional yet well-educated and equal to man in every aspect, leads her to interpret Islam in a way that suits her characterizations. She suggests that it was Islam that promoted the idea of equality for men and women:

“In the sixth century came Islam, with a very different attitude towards women. The supreme aim of Islam being social justice, it could not leave half of society out of consideration. In pre-Islamic Arabia the position of women was degraded to that of cattle. Islam instituted marriage, limited the number of wives and in case of a divorce, bounded the husband to pay alimony. [...] But its greatest significance for the modern world is that it is the first system which accords property and economic rights to women and makes them independent of the guardianship of their man.”<sup>538</sup>

As for women within the Ottoman Empire, Adivar argues that they experienced a “real chance” in 1908.<sup>539</sup> The political and social creed of the Young Turks, which

---

<sup>537</sup> Aytürk, *Turkish Linguists Against the West: The Origins of Linguistic Nationalism in Atatürk's Turkey*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 40 Issue 6, 2004, p 8-9.

<sup>538</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 199

<sup>539</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 215

strongly emphasized education, especially women's education, accomplished something important; the atmosphere became more libertarian for women and it was fully realized that a new Turkey could never be created without the collaboration of women.<sup>540</sup>

The process that began in 1908 continued through the next decade. Women's publications proliferated, and the women's press became more autonomous and better established. Women's societies grew in numbers and range of activities, supporting causes such as the Ottoman Navy or defense in general. Women increasingly assumed public roles and not only in the workforce. While the first women orators of 1912 probably addressed all-female audiences, after the 1918 armistice and occupation of Istanbul, women gave truly public, impassioned speeches at huge protest meetings to the general public.<sup>541</sup>

Women's role, especially their sacrifices and moral strength during the National Struggle was one of the main themes in the literature of Adivar:

“I met an old woman in a Smyrna town, or rather, on the rests and ruins of a town, who had emigrated five times since the Balkan war because she did not want to die under foreign flag. What is there in a red piece of cloth with a crescent on it? It is the symbol which matters and the symbol meant more than life. I will not multiply instances of women's sacrifice in those days. They are beyond number. [...] But there is one thing I must say in regard to the women. Great as the material part of their service was, the moral part of it was still greater. For once they had thrown themselves into

---

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*, USA 2010, p. 235

the struggle, I never saw a woman lose heart. That had an incalculable value in such a struggle as we went through.”<sup>542</sup>

This statement could be regarded as the foundation on which Adivar built some of her leading characters in her most celebrated stories. Lale in *Tatarcik*, Ayse in *Atesten Gomlek* (A Shirt of Flame) and Aliye in *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore) exemplify morally strong, determined women, willing to sacrifice their lives for their country. Particularly, *Vurun Kahpeye* is the most poignant example of the ‘ideal Turkish woman’ Adivar aspires to create.

First published as a serial in *Aksam* newspaper in 1923, and as a book in 1926,<sup>543</sup> *Vurun Kahpeye* tells the story of Aliye, a young idealistic woman who travels to a rural village in Anatolia as a primary school teacher during the years of Turkish War of Independence. While her only aim is to sow national feelings among the villagers, particularly the children, she cannot escape the tragic end that awaits her. Adivar, in fact, draws attention to the war between the old Ottoman mentality and the new Turkish identity, and Aliye is the woman that fights against the old mentality of a circle of “ignorant” men led by the person of Imam, the sect leader. The fact that Aliye is a teacher is another metaphor utilized by Adivar to show the role of women as educators.

The story begins with Aliye arriving at the village, looking for a place to stay. She is an orphan and spent most of her life in boarding schools. Her strong-headedness, idealistic nature and general are the first impressions Adivar provides to the reader

---

<sup>542</sup> Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Delhi 2012, p. 2

<sup>543</sup> Enigun, *Halide Edib Adivar*’in *Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi*, Istanbul, p.191

about Aliye. As for the reason for her arrival to a remote village in Anatolia, it is explained in the paragraph below:

“During her last year at school, a fierce and passionate teacher of theirs told them to ‘Work in Anatolia’ and while all the other students discussed this among themselves because it was a fashionable idea to entertain, Aliye made this idea into a passionate goal.”<sup>544</sup>

Passionate idealism is a recurrent theme in Adivar’s literature. Women are portrayed as educators and not just as school teachers. This is the case of Lale in *Tatarcik*, as well. Aliye stands out as a young, beautiful, passionate woman that Adivar believes the young Republic needs to see. Throughout the story, Aliye is put to extremely difficult tests of life to see that she never deviates from her “cause”, once again, illustrating the moral strength that the new Turkish woman must have.

### **Aliye as a Role Model for the Turkish Women of the New Republic**

In her first morning in the village, Aliye goes to the school to meet the principal. The entrance of the school does not portray a welcoming scene: an old, blind man is present; the floors are dirty with dust and spit. The room of the principal where Aliye is told to wait is gloomy with an awfully heavy scent. The description of place can be understood as the general state of the collapsing Ottoman Empire during the War of Independence, pretty much similar to Karaosmanoglu’s description in *Kiralik Konak* of a dusty wooden mansion with an old man living inside it.

The reader knows right away that Aliye has a mission in the village: to bring change. She lives with Omer Efendi, a member of the board of governors, and his wife

---

<sup>544</sup> Adivar, Vurun Kahpeye, Istanbul 2012, p. 22

Gulsum. These people are portrayed as a specific type of Anatolian peasants that Adivar is fond of, old and uneducated yet brave and good-hearted. As a comparison, Fahir can be cited in his endeavours to change and “modernize” Macide. But this time, the protagonist is a woman and she is given the mission to change an entire village.<sup>545</sup>

Aliye’s main drive is education. On a personal level, Adivar, had received an invitation in 1916, from CUP leader Cemal Pasha to go to Damascus and Beirut to open up new schools for girls and regulate the orphanages.<sup>546</sup> A pupil from those days, Munevver Ayasli, later wrote that, “Halide Edib had arrived to Syria in a mission.”<sup>547</sup> In fact, Adivar went to Syria to teach Arab children the Turkish language and culture. Four schools and one orphanage, the *AynTura*, were opened and Adivar became the administrator in all of them.<sup>548</sup> Her experience in a foreign and rural place to educate young pupils simply manifested itself in Aliye’s character.

The village’s elementary school is a miniature scale of the town or village itself; there are students from different backgrounds.<sup>549</sup> The most privileged want special treatment while the poor children barely attend classes. The school is old and decayed. Especially, boys behave badly. They even beat girls when no authority is present. The working-class children seem to behave better, described with their “round faces, red cheeks and dirty hands”. Aliye likes them the most.<sup>550</sup>

---

<sup>545</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar’in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 192

<sup>546</sup> Calislar, Halide Edib, Istanbul 2011, p. 138

<sup>547</sup> Ayasli, Isittiklerim, Gorduklerim, Bildiklerim, Istanbul 1973, p. 81

<sup>548</sup> Calislar, Halide Edib, Istanbul 2011, p. 140

<sup>549</sup> Adivar, Vurun Kahpeye, Istanbul 2012, p. 30

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

When Aliye first walks into the classroom, she encounters “a pile of cigarette smoke and a lot of tiny faces smiling at her with disrespect inside the dirty room with papers sticking to its windows.”<sup>551</sup> Adivar’s rather horrific portrayal of the state of this school and its pupils clearly points towards the challenge that awaits Aliye.

Adivar’s stern criticism of the Ottoman empire is present in different sources about Adivar, herself. Harriet Fischer, a missionary who worked in one of Adivar’s schools in Beirut observed that she would make negative comments about the Ottoman empire. But Adivar justified this by saying that, “No one can love their country as much as I do, however, no one can criticize their country as harshly as I do as well.”<sup>552</sup> This portrayal of the school’s village is clearly an attempt to criticize the Ottoman Empire, regarding its lousy management and the damage this caused to the country.

The change does not happen overnight in Aliye’s school. It is a slow and rough process for Aliye to encourage her students to become disciplined and accept a more Western style education system. The first thing that Aliye practices when she begins teaching is to treat all children equally, regardless of their family backgrounds or class. She does not discriminate between children and protects the rights of those who come from poorer families against those who come from privileged ones. This did not go unnoticed in the town and stirs up a protest against her among the influential families such as Kantarci Huseyin Efendi. In one instance, Aliye sends Huseyin Efendi’s son back home one day after he gets into a fight with another boy from a poorer family. Aliye has to stand up against many threats by Kantarci Huseyin, as

---

<sup>551</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, p. 31

<sup>552</sup> Barton, *Turkish Atrocities*, USA1998, p.164



well as by his wife and his older son. However, she does not relent and refuses to lose her courage.

Throughout the story, Aliye faces one challenge after another, each one more difficult and nerve-racking than the last. Adivar carefully presents situations where Aliye's patience, morals and her dedication to her values and her country are put to test time and again. This could be interpreted as an autobiographical confession. Adivar herself had faced many challenges during the years of Tanzimat and after. When she began her career as a young writer voicing her opinion on women's rights in various publications, it attracted the attention and scorn of some conservative circles. This culminated into the 31 March Incident, when her life was under threat. She fled the country and sought refuge in the UK for almost 6 months, where she stayed with her friend Elizabeth Fry in Marylebone in London.<sup>553</sup> This was the beginning of a lifetime of challenges and struggles against values and ideals Adivar believed and stood for. From this perspective, it could be argued that she is channeling her own struggles through her protagonist Aliye.

One of the most pointed challenges faced by Aliye is a similar challenge encountered by Adivar: the resistance against the process of Westernization. Having been raised with British manners at home<sup>554</sup>, and with American ones in an American college run by American women<sup>555</sup>, Adivar grew up to be a woman ahead of her time. From an early age, she felt perfectly comfortable expressing herself publicly, never shying

---

<sup>553</sup> Calislar, Halide Edib, Istanbul 2010, pp. 75-76

<sup>554</sup> Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, USA 2005, p.23

<sup>555</sup> Enigun, *Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi*, Istanbul 2007, p. 34

away from engaging in counter arguments with his contemporary male colleagues.<sup>556</sup>

This is her common trait with Aliye, who, also, is not scared of expressing her opinions in male-dominated settings. The consequences of this can be harsh. For Adivar, it was death threats; for Aliye, it was death.

The resistance against Westernization is often shown as a fear of degeneration and corruption of social and family values. This has been generally observed through the literature of this period; the effects of Westernization usually manifest itself as the collapse of values and traditions. Adivar takes a different approach towards this topic. Her main characters usually stand against a group of people who firmly believe that Westernization will be the end of morality in society. They undermine and threaten any woman who stands for Westernization, only grasping, if anything, the superficial aspects of changes towards modernization. Adivar's characters, on the other hand, are women who adopt Western ideals, education and technology while preserving their

---

<sup>556</sup> There are many examples of arguments between Halide Edib Adivar and male authors of the time.

One of the most significant one is the article she wrote for *Vakit* newspaper on 30 June 1918, Titled *Evimize Bakalım: Turkcülugun Faaliyet Sahası* (Let us Take Care of Our Own Home: The Operation Field of Turkism) where she argued that, "The forces of Pan-Turkism seek to induce us to interest ourselves the welfare of all Mohammedan Turks, and of Turanians a well. Our young men now engaged in war are coming more and more to the conclusion that ideals do not mean anything in themselves, that they have a right to existence only as instruments to save this country." Edib argued that it was not practical to send teachers to Azerbaijan at the moment when there weren't enough teachers in Anatolia: "The country can be saved only if these young men remain here and decide to work uninterruptedly..." This article fired up the debate to establish whether Turkish nationalism should be limited to Anatolia or if it should cover all areas where Turks lived. Resulting from this there were strong attacks directed at Halide Edib, especially from *Türk Ocakı* where this issue was still highly debated.

moral principles and values. Their tension with society originates from this particular point. They are an example showing that Westernization does not necessarily cause the moral decay of society, and that women can adopt the positive aspects of modernity, such as receiving the right to equal education, as well as the right to take an active role in every aspect of society.

Aliye is a profound example of this breed of woman who is able to combine Western thought with Eastern values. She is highly educated, independent and out on her own in a remote town in Anatolia as a teacher. She does not wear a veil to cover her hair or her face and she has no reservations about standing up for herself or for others. She is almost crafted to perfection—perhaps not the most realistic character. She is almost too perfect, but designed to be a role model for female readers to emulate. This concept of the ideal female character is a common theme in many of Adivar's novels: Rabia in *Sinekli Bakkal* (The Clown and His Daughter), Lale in *Tatarcik* and even Handan in *Handan* are women who are idealized characters. However, this reaches its height with Aliye in *Vurun Kahpeye*.

Aliye is perhaps another good example as to how these novels of the transitional period were not primarily written with artistic aims in mind, but rather with a purpose to contribute to the reconstruction of the new Turkish identity. *Vurun Kahpeye* is a crucial piece of literary work in Turkish literature, in the sense that it speaks openly about women's issues, such as joining the workforce, forging a modern identity and finding a new role in broader society. However, with respect to writing style, plot and characterization, it does not present the reader with an exceptional piece of literature. The characters are static and either pure evil or unrealistically close to perfection. While Hacı Fettah and the Greek General Damyanos never show any traces of

humanity, Aliye and her fiancée, the *Kuvayi Milliye* soldier Tosun, are almost “unhuman” in their forthrightness. They never make mistakes or misdeeds. They never struggle with doubt and do not reveal any trace of fear. The characters in *Vurun Kahpeye* do not experience any sort of transformation, be it bad to good or vice versa. They also do not experience a change of fortune. Throughout the novel they stay true to their nature without any fluctuation. This absolutism provokes the sense that these novels of the transition period were mainly written to be either a set of examples during the reconstruction of the new Turkish identity, or as a warning against rapid Westernization.

That being said, when it comes to creating female characters of strong morals and values, Adivar fights a battle almost singlehandedly. It may have been a deliberate intention of Adivar to create a female character that is not morally corrupted by Westernization, or inclined to corrupt those around her, but instead willing to adopt all the positive aspects of modernity and use it to advance her status while uplifting society at the same time. This again might be based on her personal experiences as a child:

“...had a strong admiration for the English and their way of brining up children. [...] He occupied himself personally with her dresses, underclothing, shoes and stockings. Turkey having, however, not yet entered the road of reform and modernism by a slavish imitation of English outward appeal, he did not make her wear a hat.”<sup>557</sup>

Adivar explains that her own upbringing, clothing, education, even diet, were unconventionally “modern” for her time, and she felt the impact of this in her life. She

---

<sup>557</sup> Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, USA 2005, p. 23

was looked upon as a different child compared to those of her age and class.<sup>558</sup> She was the first Turkish Muslim woman to graduate from the American college in Istanbul. Adivar advocated for women's right to unveil, to reject polygamy, to demand equal education and financial independence.

Just like Adivar herself, Aliye is also looked upon as a different woman compared to the uneducated Anatolian women. This causes discomfort among the villagers:

“Against all the challenges and the gossip, was working with the all the strength in her young and faithful heart.”<sup>559</sup> And over time, only a small group of people show a slight change of heart. The first group to let their guards down are the mothers who have children in Aliye's school.<sup>560</sup> But she also makes a strong enemy: the imam of the village, Hacı Fettah Efendi, who does not approve of her presence in the village and perceives her as a major threat.

Another challenge Aliye faces is the stand she takes regarding *Kuvayi Milliye* (National Forces). When word reaches the town that the Greek forces are moving forward in Anatolia, a movement that divides the country into two, almost everyone agrees that the Greek forces are unwelcomed; however, there were some who did not want *Kuvayi Milliye* just as much as they don't want the Greek Forces.<sup>561</sup> Some people were wary “that Kuvayi Milliye was something similar to Bolshevism and that they were going to confiscate their possessions and give it to the poor.”<sup>562</sup> However, Aliye's stand did not waver. She firmly believes in *Kuvayi Milliye* and is willing to do

---

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

<sup>559</sup> Adivar, Vurun Kahpeye, Istanbul 2012, p. 31

<sup>560</sup> Adivar, Vurun Kahpeye, Istanbul 2012, p. 39

<sup>561</sup> Adivar, Vurun Kahpeye, Istanbul 2012, p. 41

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

anything in her power to help them. This especially becomes apparent when she falls in love with a *Kuvayi Milliye* soldier.

The incident with Kuvayi Milliye is important as it demonstrates Adivar's approach towards the Turkish War of Independence. The resistance against occupying powers appeared since day one, while Ataturk was still in Cilicia.<sup>563</sup> The resistance movement spread throughout the country and became more organized in areas heavily occupied by foreign forces and took the name of local Kuvayi Milliye.<sup>564</sup> Ranging from roving guerilla bands to regular volunteer militias attached to the local political committees, *Kuvayi Milliye* was highly heterogeneous, including not only soldiers, but also civil servants, peasants, nomads, bandits, members of the CUP as well as women and children, all united in reaction to the occupation.<sup>565</sup>

It is important to highlight that *Vurun Kahpeye* is the second novel of Adivar after *Atesten Gomlek* (The Shirt of Flame), which tells the story of the National Struggle.<sup>566</sup> Here the Western Powers are represented by the occupying Greek forces and the resistance against them is *Kuvayi Milliye*. The story is, at its core, about a teacher trying to help the national forces against the occupation of the Greeks. She eventually gets killed because of her actions. The portrayal of the national forces in the story, just as Aliye's character, can be regarded as an idealistic version of resistance. In *Vurun Kahpeye*, the *Kuvayi Milliye* is represented by Tosun, a young brave soldier who later on is engaged to Aliye. This engagement of the educated young woman to the brave

---

<sup>563</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II*, UK 2002, pp. 340-341

<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

<sup>566</sup> Enigun, *Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi*, Istanbul 2007, p. 191

soldier of the new Republic is also highly symbolic. Here, Adivar emphasizes towards a future that is built through these two characters. Through the bravery of the national forces, combined with a new, educated, strong modern Turkish identity, a new nation can be born. The novel was written and published in 1923, just after the War of Independence, when the new Republic of Turkey was established. The idealized version of the national struggle could be the result of the victory being so fresh in Adivar's mind, but with a sense of urgency about the reconstruction process.

Throughout the story, it is abundantly clear that Aliye's main struggles are against men. She has to fight with Hacı Fettah on an ideological basis, and with two other men who are after her affection. One of these men is Uzun Huseyin, a wealthier man with prestige in the village who wishes to make Aliye his second wife. The other is Major Damyanos, the head of Greek forces occupying the village. Instead, Aliye gets engaged to Tosun and this causes irritation with Hacı Fettah, who is an enemy of the *Kuvayi Milliye*. One day, while taking an *abdest*, Hacı Fettah sees Aliye and Tosun, hand in hand walking down the street at night.<sup>567</sup> Together with the news of engagement, this scene drives him crazy, and he invites the Greek forces into the village.

When comparing the two characters, it is difficult to see a difference between Hacı Fettah and the Greek major Damyanos in terms of how "evil" they are depicted in the story. It is neither one nor the other who eventually brings catastrophe to this Anatolian town, but it is when they combine forces that it leads to tragedy. It is intriguing that Adivar chose Hacı Fettah, of all the people in the village, to aid and assist the occupying powers and let them into the town. The imam of the town has a

---

<sup>567</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, pp. 71-72

deep influence over people, and when he senses that Aliye and Tosun are joining forces, he decides to aid the Greek military. In Adivar's writing, this reads more like a chess move; when the chaos fell upon the town, all parties had to make a move and make a decision as to who they want to stand with. In Adivar's story, the choices are very clear, no character has a shred of doubt in his or her mind as to where they want to stand or whom they wish to support. The fact that the imam character, who symbolizes the old Ottoman mentality, who preaches Islam but who is also corrupt, teams with the Greek occupying forces demonstrates that Adivar held both groups equally responsible and accountable for the state that the Empire found itself in. And the fact that she teamed Aliye with Tosun highlights that, in Adivar's mind, these two groups of people were the country's only hope for freedom and survival.

The Greek forces enter the town as "the army of civilization, not to be feared."<sup>568</sup> However, it becomes quickly apparent from the immoral and cruel behavior of the soldiers that this is not the case. From now on the politics between the four men revolve around Aliye. Haci Fettah wants Aliye dead, while Tosun wants her to stay in the village while he goes to get his army ready to attack. Uzun Huseyin does not want Tosun to have Aliye. However, he is also not thrilled about the fact that the Greek Major now also wants Aliye for himself. In a tangled situation such as this one, Aliye shows nothing but determination, faith and courage.

Haci Fettah Efendi's justification for teaming up with the Greek forces is simple:

"Haci Fettah Efendi had set his mind to conduct a moral cleanse. He was going to kill all these low-life men and whores, but before that he was going to hand over the prettiest of these women to the Greeks and establish

---

<sup>568</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, p. 97



his status with them. After that he was going to get these women murdered as the Sheria Law ordered, by making the villagers stone them, therefore he was going to receive Allah's praises upon himself. Who knows, perhaps after the Greeks had settled, he could even go to Haj.'"<sup>569</sup>

The idea of the "moral cleanse," of the concern with status and the seeking of power are all indications of the hypocrisy of the religious leaders in the country. Haci Fettah Efendi believes Westernization and Western morals are the enemy of Sharia, and in order to establish this Islamic law, he unites with the Westerners. This hypocrisy and obvious contradiction is not lost on the reader. Adivar's third voice when she takes Haci Fettah's perspective is ironic and there is a hint of silliness that the reader can sense when following his thought, such as the last sentence in the quote above. The tone of this third-person voice of the writer changes when she moves from Haci Fettah to Aliye to Damyanos, thus making sure the reader gets a sense of their characters, as well as their emotions, intentions and states of mind. When the voice switches to Aliye, the reader gets a sense of urgency, determination and a deep emotional tone:

"Aliye felt devastated with a thousand thoughts and emotions while looking at this man's [Damyanos] shaking shoulders, his cruel head she hated with every fiber of her body and soul. This horrible enemy of the Turks, who built his entire reputation and fortune through Turkish blood and Turkish estate, was finally laying all of that at the feet of a small Turkish girl."<sup>570</sup>

---

<sup>569</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, pp. 93

<sup>570</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, pp. 133-134

The change in tone also gives away the true feelings of the author towards her characters. While Halide Edib feels almost sorry for Aliye for all the hardship she endures, there is great respect in her voice. When the reader hears Aliye's side of the story, they get the feeling that Aliye is in great suffering but that she is also strong and determined. When Adivar is talking about Hacı Fettah, the voice is uneducated, vulgar with a slightly silly undertone. When Adivar switches to Damyanos, however, she is cruel about who he is and his intentions. There is no foolish undertone; the voice is serious and even threatening at times. When Adivar is talking about Damyanos or Hacı Fettah, there is no space for the reader to feel empathy, or to be able to understand why they are doing what they are doing. The reader is presented with clear choices of good and evil and it is apparent from the beginning which side Adivar wishes the reader to take.

### **Islam, Traditionalism and the New Turkish Woman**

*Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore) has a structure that allows for a theme based examination because, rather than the plot, it is the themes which carry the story, and each character represents a specific issue that Adivar wishes to address. While the identity of the new Turkish woman is one of the main themes in the novel, the other is religion and traditionalism.<sup>571</sup> Adivar insists on the theme of religion, especially the bigotry and ignorance that it might lead to if "wrong" people lead the masses. This is portrayed by the imam of the village, Hacı Fettah Efendi, who continuously tries to manipulate the residents of the village with his regular Friday sermons. The imam character is introduced to the story with a dramatic scene, allowing the theme of religious bigotry to be highlighted.

---

<sup>571</sup> Enigun, Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Batı Meselesi, Istanbul 2007, p. 192

On a Friday not too long after her arrival to the village, Aliye takes her class of children on a walk through the village. The news of Greek occupation has already reached the village and divided the people into two; those who support the *Kuvayi Milliye* (National Forces), the irregular Turkish militia forces, and those who were against them as much as they were against the Greek forces.<sup>572</sup> Aliye is a supporter of the *Kuvayi Milliye* forces and she teaches her students nationalist Turkish anthems and speaks out against the occupying powers on every chance she gets and encourages her students to roam around the village with Turkish flags to enhance patriotic feelings. During such a walk with her students she has an encounter with Hacı Fettah Efendi who is giving his Friday sermon after prayers in the center of the village to the male population of the town. Hacı Fettah's preaching on that particular Friday is on *Kuvayi Milliye* and he is talking against the nationalist forces:

“Do not wish for those without a mustache, those who wear collars like infidels, those who are the enemy of religion! If given the chance they will shatter what is sacred, unveil our women, deny the *sunnet* and *farz*! Do not wish for them! Their blood is as *helal* as of a *kâfir*! In fact, I say that if a force, wherever it may come from, protects our mosques and religion, recognize its sovereignty!”<sup>573</sup>

Halide Edib's portrayal of the imam character is not of a subtle nature. The author clearly wishes to highlight what she feels is the backward mentality of the religious leaders in the Ottoman Empire and the misuse of religion to manipulate people. In this scene, Adivar even takes it a step further, as she not only implies that this mentality

---

<sup>572</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, p. 22

<sup>573</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, pp. 42-43

was one of the reasons behind the collapse of the empire, but it is also one of the major obstacles standing in the way of the establishment of the new Turkish nation. The imagery that the imam employs in his speech regarding women is explicit—the unveiling of women. In the story, Aliye does not wear a veil to cover her face or her hair, and the imam is already condemning this modernization.

However, it is also important to note that Halide Edib makes a clear distinction between Islam as a religion and the religious men who use Islam as a means to an end to manipulate and control the masses. When Aliye enters the town’s center with her group of young students, the first thing she notices is the “old, beautiful mosque of the village with its white minarets”<sup>574</sup> and then she sees Hacı Fethah Efendi as “a dark mass”<sup>575</sup> standing in front of the mosque. Here, the contrast of the white mosque and the dark mass that is the imam is abundantly clear in terms of the actual religion itself, and those who misinterpret and manipulate it. Halide Edib usually makes this distinction very clear in many of her stories: it is not the religion that is to blame.

When Aliye enters the village’s center with her students singing national anthems and Hacı Fethah Efendi sees them coming, he screams to repress their voices:

“Do you see this? Infidels are walking among Muslims, unveiled and singing, to plant evil thoughts in their hearts. These are the condemned, do not trust these people with your children. You do not wish to see the Greek among us, but if you also do not wish to see stones raining from the sky, destroy these women, otherwise the wrath of God will be upon us!”<sup>576</sup>

---

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

<sup>576</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, p. 45

Haci Fettah Efendi clearly views the occupation by the Greeks and the modernization of society, especially of the women, as that of the same nature and he condemns both of them as ‘infidels’. Therefore, from the beginning of the story it is clear that Aliye’s fight will be on two fronts: one against the Greek occupation of the village and another against the propaganda of the imam. Here, Edib clearly wishes to draw the reader’s attention to this two pronged battle during the Turkish War of Independence.

While the nationalist forces, led by Ataturk, were fighting against the occupying forces in order to carry out the revolution that would eventually reshape the country from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, there was also a fight being waged against the old Ottoman mentality. This mentality was largely resisting the revolution and the modernization because they feared that the being more like the West meant being more like Christians. It was one or the other, the traditional Islamic Ottoman identity or the Westernized Christian identity, which was largely perceived as the identity of the ‘infidels’.

According to M. Sukru Hanioglu, Ataturk aimed to replace religion with nationalism through a radical reinterpretation of Islam from a Turkish nationalist perspective.<sup>577</sup>

The first step towards accomplishing this came straight after the victory of the Independence War, with the abolishment of the Sultanate on 1 November 1922.<sup>578</sup>

When explaining the separation of sultanate and the caliphate, Ataturk made three significant points, stresses Hanioglu:

“First, he had presented the development of the caliphate strictly within the context of history, and not as a religious issue. Second, he had

---

<sup>577</sup> Hanioglu, *Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography*, USA 2011, p. 132.

<sup>578</sup> Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity: A History*, USA 2010, p. 224

presupposed a fundamental dichotomy between serenity and the caliphate. Third, he had implicitly rejected the accepted view, propounded by the *ulema*, that the caliphate and sultanate were inseparable.”<sup>579</sup>

This idea of separating the sultanate from the caliphate, followed by the abolition of the caliphate on 3 March 1924,<sup>580</sup> may explain the idea behind Adivar’s characterization of Hacı Fethi Efendi and her insistence of Islam’s misrepresentation, even abuse, by these authorities. Especially for women, the separation of Islam from state affairs had made a substantial difference. However, as Suna Kili points out, defining secularism as the separation of religion and state is not enough when it comes to Kemalism which encompassed even much more.<sup>581</sup> Secularism in a Kemalist sense also means allowing individuals complete freedom regarding religion and the protection of this freedom.<sup>582</sup> In this sense, Adivar is supportive of secularism while stressing that one does not have to abandon her own faith in order to achieve quality by law.

Among the three men who are after Aliye, the Greek Major Damyanos, who represents the imminent threat of Western occupying powers, Uzun Huseyin, who represents the corrupt institution of Ottoman Empire, and Tosun, who represents the new nation, Aliye chooses Tosun as her partner. This allows Adivar an opportunity to create a male character based on the new values and modernity of the nation. Tosun is

---

<sup>579</sup> Hanioglu, Ataturk, USA 2011, p. 139

<sup>580</sup> Findley, Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity: A History, USA 2010, p. 226.

<sup>581</sup> Kili, Ataturk Devrimi, Istanbul 2008, p. 212

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

courageous and devoted to his cause of saving the country from the occupying forces, but he is also more modern in his ways of thinking. This is highlighted in a scene between Tosun and the other teacher in Aliye's school, Hatice Hanim. Hatice Hanim is an older woman who is set in her ways and does not approve of Aliye introducing new things to the school. When Tosun visits the school to meet Aliye, he finds Hatice Hanim instead and asks her if she is the only one who works there:

“ - You could say that sir. There is a new teacher from Istanbul, but between you and me, apparently she took the children to the town's market yesterday and she did not wear a veil to cover her face and the people were offended. They assaulted her and she took a sick day today, did not come to the school.

[...] Tosun Bey shot a harsh look at Hatice Hanim. “*Muallime Hanim*<sup>583</sup>, honor has nothing to do with a woman covering her face or not. And religion does not equal to veiling. There are those women who cover their faces however, behind closed door they do unspeakable things. Therefore, the people of this town have no right to assault the new teacher just because she does not wear a veil over her face.”<sup>584</sup>

As opposed to women morally corrupting men with their superficial understanding of modernity and Westernism, Adivar portrays two people supporting each other as they fight for what they believe is in the best interest of the country. In a way, it could be argued that Adivar puts Aliye in between a group of men who would challenge her in every possible way, but she also does provide a character who sets an example of the new male Turkish identity through Tosun.

---

<sup>583</sup> “Ms Teacher”, a way to address a female teacher in old Turkish.

<sup>584</sup> Adivar, Vurun Kahpeye, Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2012, p. 54

The female character in Turkish literature during the transitional period was a highly addressed subject by many leading authors of the time. From 1920 and onwards, the negative influences of Westernism on young women and how it corrupted their morality was a dominant subject in Turkish literature.<sup>585</sup> Important writers such as Guntekin and Karaosmanoglu have used women to highlight the misinterpretation of Westernization and the dangers of rapid modernization that could lead to the destruction of society. As has been discussed in previous chapters, in these stories, male authors such as Guntekin and Karaosmanoglu have cast the same role upon women. The women's understanding of modernity solely relies on dressing more provocatively, socializing and flirting with men freely, consuming alcohol and even leading the life of a mistress.

However, Adivar did not agree with this metaphor and she mainly adopted other characteristics for her female protagonists. In *Vurun Kahpeye*, Aliye symbolizes the sacrifice women had to make during the national struggle by primarily moving to a rural Anatolian village to teach the young generation and ultimately by sacrificing her life for the new nation. Lale, in *Tatarcik*, also makes sacrifices. As an educated woman who is not willing to compromise her morals and principles and who wishes to educate those around her, she has to sacrifice the affection and companionship of her neighbors and her social circle for the sake of national duty. In Adivar's highly autobiographical novel *Handan*, the main character also sacrifices her life as a consequence of being well-educated independent women whom the society is not yet ready to welcome.

---

<sup>585</sup> Gulendam, *Türk Romanında Kadın Kimliği*, Konya 2006, p. 28



Apart from the theme of sacrifice, women in Adivar's novels also symbolize the ultimate new identity for the burgeoning Turkish nation. The changing role of women in the family, community and society as well as women's role in reconstructing the national/cultural identity were all major themes in Adivar's literature. The evolution of the identity was almost constructed in a way to set an example to a nation that was going through a transition period and was struggling to modernize. Adivar's protagonists are idealistic characters who are almost too perfect in their creation, which indicates that they were created as role models, perhaps not to identify with but to emulate.

Women were the symbol of change during the period of modernization. It could be argued that what set apart women from men was the degree of change during this short period of time. While some change did occur in men's lives, such as monogamy and the change in outfits, it was women's lives that went under a revolutionary change. Thus, regardless of their perspective as to how this change affected society and morality, Turkish literature agreed on the fact that women were the symbol for change.

Adivar, perhaps in an attempt to balance Western education and manners with Eastern values and morals, devotes an entire chapter to a scene that takes place inside a mosque during a *mevlit*.<sup>586</sup> In the chapter entitled, "*Mevlit ve Ferdasi*"<sup>587</sup> (The Mevlit and Afterwards), Adivar describes an Islamic prayer-service taking place in the village's mosque. During this chapter, the reader has the opportunity to catch a glimpse at the inner-world of Aliye, quite different than the mission-driven, idealist

---

<sup>586</sup> An Islamic religious service.

<sup>587</sup> Adivar, Vurun Kahpeye, Istanbul 2012, pp. 82-93

character that was introduced thus far. Aliye opens up about faith and Islam and the reader witnesses the strong faith she harbors in her soul. The prayer is read by an elderly man from Istanbul who happens to be passing by the village on his journey and as he prays. Adivar tells the reader that, “Aliye couldn’t remember ever feeling something so deeply,”<sup>588</sup> thus highlighting the idea that women can encompass both Western modernism without compromising their Islamic faith and their Eastern values.

### **Sacrifice, Women and the Birth of a Nation**

This new idealistic identity does not come without sacrifice, especially as Adivar prepares a horrific end for Aliye. As Aliye negotiates the terms of her foster-father’s return from exile with the Greek major Damyanos, and while waiting for her fiancée to return to the village with his men to free them from Greek occupation, she is murdered by a group of men led by the Hacı Fettah. After a short while the Turkish army marches into the village and saves it from the Greek occupation while also hanging Hacı Fettah and Uzun Huseyin. This somewhat gives the idea that while Adivar believes Turkish people will suffer heavily during this time period and will have to make sacrifices, perhaps even the ultimate sacrifice, this will not be in vain. In the end justice will be done and the nation will prevail.

Aliye’s fiancée, Tosun, is seen one last time after the death of Aliye and the reader will learn that he has lost both his legs during the war—another personal sacrifice for the sake of the higher goal, that of the nation. But the novel ends with a letter that is written by Tosun to his friend Ali.<sup>589</sup> Tosun writes that he “does not have the ability

---

<sup>588</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, p. 85

<sup>589</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012, pp. 206-207.

to comprehend the suffering she had to go through nor the degree of sacrifice she had made.”<sup>590</sup> And he promises that he will make it his mission in life to continue the work Aliye had begun. While Adivar clearly shows that Tosun had made sacrifices for his country, she also has him confess that these sacrifices are nowhere near the sacrifices that Aliye had to make. This is a point worth stressing, for it has multiple dimensions to explore.

The theme of sacrifice has been a major one in Turkish literature, starting from the period of the national struggle stretching towards the first decade of the new Republic. This theme usually surfaced as the necessary pain and loss the nation had to endure in order to emerge as a new, strong and independent nation. The transition from Islamic Empire to the secular nation was a journey of war, loss and metamorphoses. The nation primarily had to win back its independence from the occupying powers and then to evolve into a secular, modern nation. In order to achieve this, certain sacrifices had to be made and in literature this usually manifested itself as the death of a beloved young male character.

In *Kiralik Konak* (A Mansion for Rent) Hakki Cenis is the young virtuous man who has his country's best interest at heart. The woman he is in love with, and later on rejects, is the morally corrupted Seniha. In the novel it is evident that the moral corruption of Seniha is due to her misinterpretation of Westernization. She is portrayed as a woman who enjoys parties, drinking, flirting with multiple men and she possesses a selfish disposition. While the major emphasis is on three different generations and how they perceive concepts like love, marriage, religion and the

---

<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

generation gap between them caused by Westernization,<sup>591</sup> the theme of sacrifice is also quite pointed. However, like most of his male contemporaries, Karaosmanoglu Yakup Kadri also casts the role of the young virtuous Turk taking the duty of sacrifice to a male character. Meanwhile the women are portrayed as the summary of all that has gone wrong as a result of Westernization.

The last scene of *Kiralik Konak* is an appropriate example for this. While having a dinner party, Seniha receives the news that Hakki Celis has died at the front. After giving it thought for a moment, she continues to enjoy herself at her modern dinner party.<sup>592</sup> This striking scene portraying Seniha is almost inhuman, a person stripped off of emotions and values because of Westernization, indicates that while men are making necessary sacrifices to save the country, women are trying to adopt the superficial ways of Western culture.

Adivar approaches this issue from two different perspectives. The first one is that it is the woman who, as previously analyzed throughout this chapter, adapted to the necessary aspects of Westernization such as legal rights, and who advanced social status and the access to education, while holding on to her traditional values. It is the woman who carries the burden of the nation's future. Aliye is the perfect example of this, where she willingly sacrifices her life in order to educate her young students and help the Turkish nationalist forces. The final scene clearly displays that Adivar believes, while everyone made sacrifices, women suffered the most.

---

<sup>591</sup> Hayber, Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismasi, Istanbul 1993, p.171

<sup>592</sup> Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak*, Istanbul 2013, pp. 214-217.

The second perspective Adivar takes on this issue is that the modern woman did not yet have a place in society. The type of woman Adivar portrays here could be interpreted as the reverse perspective of Karaosmanoglu's portrayal of women. Adivar suggests that it is not that women misinterpret Westernism and only superficially adapt to a modern way of life, but that it is women who were well educated with a broad mind and who saw themselves as equals with men who did not yet have a place in society. The public was not ready to accept or even understand them, therefore they were largely misjudged. Although Adivar suggests that there are some women who only subscribe to the superficial ways of Westernization, and the reader meets some of these women in *Tatarcik*, they are secondary characters with no real significance to the story and they are quite few in numbers. Mainly, Adivar's characters are misunderstood women in society.

A good example for this is character Handan, whose name is given to the novel *Handan*. She is well-educated and always socializes with men with ease and perceives them as equals. She is curious, smart and dedicated. She has lived in Europe, speaks many languages, crosses her legs when she speaks to men and smokes. However, we see that at the end of the story, Handan is driven mad and tragically dies. The tragic end of Handan also suggests that, at least for the time being, society simply is not ready to accept her as the woman she is. It is another duty of sacrifice that women had to make, a price which pioneering women had to pay in order to pave the way for the emergence of a new generation of educated modern Turkish women. This "ideal woman" portrayed by Adivar, unlike the women who were portrayed as evil, corrupt

and a serious threat to the Ottoman family unit by her contemporaries, is a strong character who should set an example.<sup>593</sup>

However, Adivar does not let Aliye's sacrifice be in vain. Eventually the *Istiklal Mahkemesi* (The Independence Court) arrives in the town and Hacı Fettah, along with Uzun Huseyin, are put on trial for treason, then hanged where they killed many women.<sup>594</sup> By this, Adivar wanted to show that there will be no place for men like Hacı Fettah and Uzun Huseyin in the new Republic.<sup>595</sup>

The idea that Islam has to be left behind in order to Westernize is a dominant debate within the literary world from the beginning of the *Tanzimat* period. Women were the main subject addressed by male writers to make their negative points during this debate. While it would be wrong to suggest that the only stand against this was taken by Adivar, it can still be argued that Adivar was the first author, activist and feminist to envision a character who is modern and educated in Western ways without compromising her values. Adivar did not subscribe to the idea that one needed to avoid religion and faith in order to become modern or secular; she advocated that Western modernizations and Islam are compatible to create the perfect balance. But it was women who were in the forefront.

## Conclusion

By the time the new Republic began reforms which targeted women, the Ottoman women's movement had a fifty-year history. In the 1920s, women's emancipation

---

<sup>593</sup> Adak, *Kadınlar Dile Dusunce*, Istanbul 2011, p.163

<sup>594</sup> Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Istanbul 2012), p. 203.

<sup>595</sup> Ceri, *Türk Romanında Kadın*, Istanbul 1996, p. 27

became a major policy front with the dress reforms and the civil code, and following from these reforms, the right to elect and be elected put Turkey ahead of many European countries. Women almost became the face of the Westernization movement, and new forms of sociability manifested themselves in the changes in gender relations, what with ballroom dancing, receptions and beauty contests, as well as an active role in work force. However, there was still the expectation that Turkish women would continue to meet conventional standards of respectability and perform all customary domestic duties while playing their new roles in the young Republic.

One of the main tension over modernization, the conflict of East and West as Adivar puts it, had manifested itself as the women in Turkish literature. Men who suffered the same conflict or identity crises had usually been portrayed as weak men, manipulated by women around them in the writings of male authors. However, Adivar had a different approach to this issue: she portrayed women as the ultimate balance of East and West, as the conquerors of this conflict. Her aim was to create an identity that would ultimately be the best of two worlds: a well-educated, strong, working woman who would not compromise her Eastern and Islamic values. Her characters may be interpreted as unrealistic to some extent, but it was a different kind of approach to the issue of women and their place in society. Instead of writing a female character as a warning to highlight the dangers of Westernization and the trouble it would cause them and the weak men around them, Adivar aimed to create characters that would be role models.

This chapter examined the reconstruction of identity for women, how it evolved, the struggles and their aftermath. In doing so, Adivar's perception was specifically highlighted as she is considered to be one of the most significant pioneers of

feminism in Turkey and at times the sole female voice on women's issues. It was also important to compare Adivar's work with some of her male contemporaries in order to highlight the difference in perspective. Once again, literature served a dual purpose: a warning sign as to what would happen if these reforms were to be misinterpreted in a superficial way; and as a beacon of hope, setting an example for women, as well as for men, in how to interpret and incorporate these reforms. Thus, literature influenced the reconstruction of nation and cultural identity in Turkey from the 1908 until the end of the first decade of the new Republic.



## **Dissertation Conclusion**

In the period between 1908 and 1933 there were concrete efforts to Westernize Turkey through social and political reforms. The Empire was in ill shape, losing territory and struggling to regain control over its existing lands. While the efforts to reform the country through Westernization took place, the nation had to struggle through multiple wars, most notably the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, followed by World War I, where the Ottoman Empire found itself in an impossible impasse, and The War of Independence that followed after it in 1919 to 1922, in which the country finally got a chance to rebuild itself. Ideologies that made the Turkish revolution of 1923 possible, followed by the many reforms to transform the nation, were nurtured during these years of war, suffering and uncertainty.

This dissertation has addressed how ideas such as nationalism, Westernism, secularism and especially feminism were nurtured to pave the way towards a social transformation. In Turkey's case, the nation-building process and the reconstruction of national and cultural identity were heavily, almost overwhelmingly, influenced by literature. From the beginning, all the way back to the Young Ottomans, who eventually inspired the Young Turks, it was mainly intellectuals and writers who planted the seeds of ideas, nurtured them and presented them to the public. A nation in the midst of such sociological transformation and reconstruction requires a national education; writers and intellectuals are needed to write the books that will be used informally both by students and instructors to help them understand the transformation and carry them through the processes. In such a case literature becomes a platform for these intellectuals, a space to create, debate and propagate. Serial publications were the main instrument through which these intellectuals, the

leaders of public opinion, published their poems, articles, short stories and even novels as serials.

Although it was intellectuals of the era, through their writings, who introduced these ideas to the public, their role was not limited to mere introductions. As examined throughout this dissertation, the novels served multiple purposes: primarily, they showed how these ideas they introduced should be adopted in real life, by setting an example through their fictional characters. In addition to this, they also created characters as warning signs to show the dangers of the misinterpretation of Westernization, which would mean only applying the superficial aspects of it to one's life and leaving behind Western education. This is evident, as seen in previous chapters, by authors taking sides with some characters and clearly disavowing others. Many also predicted that this social transformation would not be an easy journey, and while some people could cope with it, like Lale from *Tatarcik* and Aliye from *Vurun Kahpeye*, some would fall into the trap of misinterpreting Westernization, such as Seniha from *Kiralik Konak*, with others attempting to stand in its way, like Ali Riza Bey from *Yaprak Dokumu*. Either way, through their characters these authors tried to demonstrate how careful one would have to be while going through this social transformation.

When examining the literature from this period, it becomes clear that there are some themes that the authors kept coming back to, as if to highlight their importance. This dissertation has identified and dissected these themes in each chapter and examined it through some of the most critical, widely read novels of this time. Themes such as the conflict of East and West, the collision of tradition and modernism, and the new,

modernized identity of Turkish women could all be classified as the initial results of the reforms, and the generation gap, the changing family unit and social life could be identified as the aftermath of this process. This dissertation aimed to show how literature, mainly the novel, was also a mirror, reflecting the era they were writing in, portraying the issues people dealt with and the transformations they went through.

It has been highlighted many times throughout this dissertation that the novel played a vast, critical role in nurturing the nation and creating ‘imagined communities’. The transformation of Turkey was vast, from an Islamic Empire to secular Republic; the reform to rebuild the nation affected and transformed all aspects of life. This scale of transformation leaves no stone unturned and given that it all took place in a relatively short span of time, it needed all the help it could get. At this point, it could be argued that the intellectuals literally wrote the textbook on how to navigate this process. As discussed in this dissertation, Ziya Gokalp, the father of Turkism, wrote a book aptly titled *The Principles of Turkism*. Halide Edib Adivar delivered lectures on the conflict of East and West, together with a long historical account of Turkey’s transitional period, which later became a book titled *The Conflict of East and West in Turkey*.

Adivar also set many examples for women with her idealistic fictional heroines in her novels to demonstrate how women could rebuild their identities by combining Eastern traditions with Western modernism. These are just a few of the examples highlighting literature’s critical role in leading the public opinion, as well as in assisting the nation-building process and reconstruction of identity.

However, the main objective of this dissertation was to specifically analyse the novel in order to see how ideas such as nationalism and Westernism were nurtured.

According to Benedict Anderson, the novel, along with the newspaper, which he deems ‘an extreme version of the book’, provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation.<sup>596</sup> What Anderson suggests here is that the novel as a genre was the tool that allowed people to reimagine their national and cultural identities, helping them to create a sense of nationhood. This dissertation aimed to demonstrate just that, by analysing critical novels and displaying how they did what Anderson has suggested.

In Turkey’s case, as this dissertation has claimed, the novel aimed to reconstruct the national identity and reimagine the nationhood in two ways: either by setting an example through ideal characters who took all the right steps to reconstruct their identities and managed to balance Eastern traditions with Western modernism; or by explicitly demonstrating the horrors awaiting those who did not follow in the footsteps of these ideal characters, portraying failed, lost, degenerated characters who misinterpreted Westernization. The nation-building process is based on certain objective preconditions, such as a common memory of the past and linguistic and cultural ties establishing social interactions. The novel’s objective in Turkey from 1908 to late 1930s was to set the perimeters of these preconditions by reshaping the collective memory, language and cultural identity. As a result, the novel became an inseparable component of Turkish identity as well as the Turkish nation.

---

<sup>596</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, UK 2006, p.25

## Bibliography

### Books

- H P. Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- H. E. Adivar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* (Delhi: Jamia Press, 2012)
- H. E. Adivar, *Handan* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2011)
- H. E. Adivar, *Kalp Agrisi* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2010)
- H. E. Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edib* (USA: Gorgias, 2005)
- H. E. Adivar, *Mor Salkimli Ev* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2011)
- H. E. Adivar, *Seviye Talip* (Istanbul: Atlas Kitapevi, 1977)
- H. E. Adivar, *Sinekli Bakkal* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2013)
- H. E. Adivar, *Tatarcik* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2009)
- H. E. Adivar, *Turkey Faces West* (USA: Yale University Press, 1930)
- H. E. Adivar, *Turkiye 'de Sark-Garp ve Amerika Tesirleri* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2009)
- H. E. Adivar, *Turk'un Atesle Imtihani* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2011)
- H. E. Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2012)
- H. E. Adivar, *Zeyno'nun Oglu* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 2010)
- F. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 2000)
- F. Ahmad, *The Young Turks* (London: Hurst Company, 2010)
- N. Aki, *Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu: Insan-Eser-Fikir-Uslup* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2001)
- S. Aksin, *Turkey: From Empire to Revolutionary Republic* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007)
- H. E. Allen, *The Turkish Transformation* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968)
- B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (UK: Verso Publishing, 2006)
- M. Andrew, *From the Sultan to Ataturk* (USA: University of Chicago Press, 2010)

- M. Andrews, C. Squire & M. Tamboukou, *Doing Narrative Research* (London: Sage, 2013)
- W. Andrews, *Intersections in Turkish Literature* (USA: The University of Michigan Press, 2011)
- H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1957)
- B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* (New York: Routledge, 2010)
- E. Auerbach, *Selected Essays: Time, History and Literature* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2014)
- M. K. Atatürk, *Nutuk* (Istanbul: Is Bankasi Kultur Yayinlari, 1963)
- T. Ates, *Türk Devrim Tarihi* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Universitesi Yayinlari, 2010)
- E. Auerbach, *Time, History, and Literature: Selected essays of Erich Auerbach* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2014)
- M. Ayasli, *Munevver, Isittiklerim, Gorduklerim, Bildiklerim* (Istanbul: Bogazici Yayinlari, 1973)
- M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2009)
- E. Balibar, *The Nation Form: History and Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1991)
- R. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977)
- J. L. Barton, *Turkish Atrocities, Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey 1915-1917* (USA: Gomidas Institute, 1998)
- A. C. Baugh, *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World* (USA: Cornell University Press, 2007)
- T. Bele, *Halide Edib Adivar: İlk Donem Yapitlari* (Istanbul: Siyah Beyaz Kitap, 2010)
- T. Bennett, *Outside Literature* (London: Routledge, 1990)
- H. K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990)
- H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994)
- W. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1961)

- S. Bozdogan & R. Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (USA: University of Washington Press, 1997)
- J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (UK: Manchester University Press, 1993)
- S. Brockmeier & D. Carbaugh, *Narrative and Identity* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam 2001)
- S. Cakir, *Osmanli Kadin Hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 2013)
- I. Calislar, *Halide Edib* (Istanbul: Everest Yayinlari, 2011)
- A. Carey-Webb, *Making Subjects: Literature and the Emergence of National Identity*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998)
- A. Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (UK: Routledge, 2000)
- B. Ceri, *Turk Romaninda Kadin: 1923-38 Donemi* (Istanbul: Simurg Yayinlari, 1996)
- A. Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose* (USA: Cornell University Press, 2007)
- P. Copley, *Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2014)
- S. Cohan & L. M. Shires, *Telling Stories: A Theoretical Analysis of Narrative Fiction* (USA: Routledge, 1999)
- V. Coopan, *Worlds Within: National Narratives and Global Connections in Postcolonial Writing* (California: Stanford University Press, 2009)
- G. Dino, *Turk Romaninin Dogusu* (Istanbul: Agora Kitapligi, 2008)
- A. Durakbas, *Halide Edib: Turk Modernlesmesi ve Feminizm* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2012)
- T. Eagleton, F. Jameson, E. W. Said, *Nationalism Colonialism and Literature* (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2001)
- J. Edwards, *Language and Identity* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- I. Enigun, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayinlari, 2013)
- I. Enigun, *Halide Edib Adivar'in Eserlerinde Dogu ve Bati Meselesi* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayinlari, 2007)
- I. Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati Arastirmalari* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayinlari, 2007)
- I. Enigun, *Yeni Turk Edebiyati: Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete (1839-1923)* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayinlari, 2013)
- K. Erdal, *Halide Edib Adivar ve Egitim* (Bursa: Ezgi Kitapevi, 2008)

- M. E. Erisligil, *Bir Fikir Adaminin Romani: Ziya Gokalp* (Ankara: Nobel, 2007)
- S. Erol, *Makaleler* (Istanbul: Kubbealti, 2010)
- N. Esen, *Modern Turk Edebiyati Uzerine Okumalar* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2006)
- A. Ö. Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Literature* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1983)
- M. Evsile, *Milli Mucadele Tarihi* (Samsun: Etut Yayinlari, 2012)
- C. V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History* (USA: Yale University Press, 2010)
- B. C. Fortna, *Gec Osmanli ve Erken Cumhuriyet Donemlerinde Okumayi Ogrenmek* (Istanbul: Koc Universitesi Yayinlari, 2013)
- A. P. Foulkes, *Literature and Propaganda* (New York: METHUEN, 1983)
- E. G. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (USA: United State Institute of Peace Press, 2008)
- J. Gardner, *The Art of Fiction* (New York: Vintage, 1991)
- H. Gecgel, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati* (Ankara: Ani Yayincilik, 2011)
- E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983)
- E. Gellner, *Nationalism and Modernization* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1964)
- G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988)
- Z. Gokalp, *Altin Isik* (Ankara: Elips, 2012)
- Z. Gokalp, *Cinaralti Yazilari* (Istanbul: Toker Yayinlari, 2005)
- Z. Gokalp, *Hirs ve Medeniyet* (Istanbul: Bilgeoguz Yayinlari, 2013), pp. 68-69.
- Z. Gokalp, *Turkculugun Esaslari* (Istanbul: Varlik, 1923)
- Z. Gokalp, *Turklesmek, Islamlasmak, Muasirlasmak* (Istanbul: Otuken Yayinlari, 2014)
- J. Gottschall & D. S. Wilson, *The Literary Animal* (USA: Northwestern University Press, 2005)



- J. Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012)
- A. C. Grayling, *The God Argument* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)
- Greiman, *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at Method* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983)
- R. Gulendam, *Türk Romanında Kadın Kimliği 1946-1960* (Konya: Salkimsogut Yayinlari, 2006)
- R. N. Guntekin, *Calikusu* (Istanbul: Inklap Yayinlari, 2016)
- R. N. Guntekin, *Yaprak Dokumu* (Istanbul: Inklap Yayinlari, 2016)
- R. N. Guntekin, *Yesil Gece* (Istanbul, Inklap Yayinlari)
- T. S. Halman, *A Millennium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011)
- T. S. Halman, *Contemporary Turkish Literature* (USA: Associated University Press, 1982)
- T. S. Halman, *Rapture and Revolution: Essays on Turkish Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2007)
- S. Hanioglu, *Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2011)
- S. Hanioglu, *Garpçılar* (Studia Islamica 86, 1997)
- A. Hayber, *Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri ve Resat Nuri'nin Romanlarında Nesil Catismasi* (Istanbul: M. E. B Yayinlari, 1993)
- L. Herman, & B. Vervaeck, *Ideology, The Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- D. Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967)
- E. J. Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1970: Programme, Myth, and Reality* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- J. Hutchinson & A. D. Smith, *Nationalisms* (UK: Oxford University Press, 1994)
- H. Inalcik, *Ataturk ve Demokratik Türkiye* (Istanbul: Kirmizi Yayinlari, 2012)
- H. Inalcik, *Osmanlı ve Modern Türkiye: Arastirmalar* (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari, 2013)

- C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire* (London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009)
- S. Irzik/ J. Parla, *Kadin Dile Dusunce: Edebiyat ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2011)
- J. R. Jakopsen & A. Pellegrini, *Secularisms* (London: Duke University Press, 2008)
- P. D. Juhl, *Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (USA: Princeton University Press, 1980)
- D. W. Jung, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East* (New York: Piccoli Zed Books, 2001)
- G. Jusdanis, *The Necessary Nation* (USA: Princeton University Press 2001)
- A. Kansu, *1908 Devrimi* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2011)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Ataturk* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2012)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Genclik ve Edebiyat Hatiralari* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1969)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Hep O Sarki* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2009)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Kiralik Konak* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2013)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Milli Savas Hikayeleri* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2011)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Nur Baba* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2012)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Politikada 45 Yil* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2012)
- Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, *Vatan Yolunda* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2010)
- K. H Karpas, *Osmanli'dan Gunumuze Toplum ve Edebiyat* (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari, 2011)
- K. H. Karpas, *Turk Demokrasi Tarihi* (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari, 2013)
- I. Kaya, *Social Theory and Later Modernities: The Turkish Experience* (UK: Liverpool University Press, 2004)
- A. Kazancigil, *Ataturk: Founder of a Modern State, The Ottoman- Turkish state and Kemalism* (London: C. Hurst& Co., 2009)
- E. Kedourie, *Nationalism* (UK: Blackwell, 2000)
- O. Kerslake & Robin, *Turkey's Engagement with Modernity: Conflict and Change in the Twentieth Century* (UK: Palgrave Macmillian, 2010)

- I. Kibris, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Turk Edebiyati* (Ankara: Ani Yayıncılık, 2004)
- P. Kinkross, *Ataturk: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London: Phoenix, 2001)
- S. Kili, *The Ataturk Revolution: A Paradigm of Modernization* (İstanbul: İis Bankası Kultur Yayınları, 2003)
- S. Kili, *Ataturk Devrimi: Bir Çağdaşlaşma Modeli* (İstanbul: Türkiye İis Bankası Kultur Yayınları, 2008)
- H. Kırımı, *İsmail Bey Gaspirali İcin* (Kırım: Kırım Türkleri Kultur ve Yardımlaşma Derneği Genel Merkezi Yayınları, 2004)
- H. Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism* (USA: Greenwood, 1976)
- A. Kolay, *Türk Modernleşmesi* (İstanbul: Yeditepe, 2013)
- F. Koprulu, *Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (Ankara: Akcag Yayınları, 2011)
- E. Koroglu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey During World War I* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007)
- E. Koroglu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savası 1914-1918: Propagandanan Milli Kimlik İnsasına* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010)
- S. Kurnaz, *Osmanlı Kadınının Yükselişi: 1908-1918* (İstanbul: Otuken Yayınları, 2013)
- P. Lamarque, *The Philosophy of Literature* (UK: Blackwell, 2009)
- N. Lamb, *The Art and Craft of Storytelling* (USA: Writer's Digest Books, 2008)
- N. Lazarus, *Postcolonial Literary Studies* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- B. Lewis, *Modern Türkiye'nin Dogusu* (Ankara: Arkadas Yayınları, 2010)
- G. Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform, A Catastrophic Success* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- M. V. Llosa, *Notes on the Death of Culture: Essays on Spectacle and Society* (London: faber& faber, 2015)
- P. Mansfield, *A History of The Middle East* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), pp. 196.
- S. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (USA: Syracuse University Press, 2000)
- S. Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015)
- R. M. Millar, *Language, Nation and Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

- B. Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008)
- J. Mullan, *How Novels Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- C. Nash, *Narrative in Culture: The Use of Story-telling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature* (London: Routledge, 1990)
- I. Ortaylı, *Cumhuriyetin İlk Yüzyılı 1923-2023* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2012)
- I. Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2014)
- U. Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
- E. Özyürek, *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007)
- A. Palmar, *Fictional Minds* (USA: University of Nebraska Press, 2004)
- J. Parla, *Türk Romanında Yazar ve Baskılaşım* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015)
- J. Peck, *How to Study a Novel* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995)
- D. E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Science* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988)
- D. Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- C. K. Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (USA: Sage, 2008)
- K. Robins, *Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe* (USA: SAGE 2013)
- D. A. Rustow, *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2009)
- M. Sadiq, *Türk Devrimi: Türkiye’de İdeolojik Değişime Bakış* (İstanbul: Destek Yayınevi, 2013)
- P. Safa, *Fatih-Harbiye* (İstanbul: Otügen Nesriyat, 1995)
- E. W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994)
- E. W. Said, *Literature and Society* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980)
- E. W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978)
- E. W. Said, *Reflections on Exile: & Other Literary & Cultural Essays* (London: GRANTA, 2012)

- M. Samsakci, *Siyaset ve Roman: Cok Partili Turkiye ve Turk Romani* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2014)
- E. Sav, *Ataturk ve Iki Buyuk Turk Dusunuru Namik Kemal Ziya Gokalp* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2001)
- B. Sezer, *Turkiye’de Modernlesme: Batılilasma Yerine Kuresellesmenin Ikamesi* (Istanbul: Dogu Kitapevi, 2012)
- Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- A. D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in the Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)
- A.D Smith, *National Identity* (USA: University of Nevada Press, 1991)
- S. Thomas, *Monkeys With Typewriters* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2012)
- Z. Toprak, *Turkiye’de Populizm: 1908-1923* (Istanbul: Dogan Kitap, 2013)
- L. Trotsky, *Art & Revolution: Writings on Literature, Politics and Culture* (Canada: Pathfinder, 2012)
- I. C. Turk, *Osmanli Devleti Sureli Yayinlarida Maarif* (Istanbul: Ari, 2014)
- M. E. Uludag, *Uc Devrin Yol Ayriminda* (Ankara: Ani Yayıncılık, 2005)
- Z. Unsal, *Edebiyatın Omuzundaki Melek: Edebiyatın Tarihle Iliskisi Uzerine Yazılar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları 2011)
- P. Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- H. White, *Topics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)
- H. White, *The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality, On Narrative* (London: University of Chicago Press, London 1981)
- H. Yavuz, *Turkiye’nin Zihin Tarihi: Turk Kulturu Uzerine Kusatici Bir Soylev* (Istanbul: Timas Yayınları, 2009)
- K. Yetis, *Turk Edebiyatı I & II: Donemler, Problemler, Sahsiyetler Aynasında* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2013)
- I. K. Yosmaoglu, *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: “Our Women Treasures: Early Republican Turkish Women and Their Public Identity”* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007)

- N. Yuval – Davis, *Gender & Nation*, (London, 2008)  
E. J. Zürcher, *Milli Mucadelede İttihatçılık* (Istanbul: İletisim, 2011)  
E. J. Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi* (Istanbul: İletisim, 2004)

## Articles

- H. E. Adivar, *Tanin*, no. 6, 24 Temmuz 1324/6, August 1908  
Fatma Aliye, “Terbiye-i İçtimaiye”, *Mehasin*, S. 10, Eylül 1325b  
G. Aytas, “The Characters Reflected in Turkish Novel in our Westernization Adventure”, *G. U. Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Cilt 22, Sayı 3, 2002  
I. Aytürk, “Turkish Linguists Against the West: The Origins of Linguistic Nationalism in Atatürk's Turkey”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 40 Issue 6, 2004  
R. Azarian, “Nationalism in Turkey: Response to a Historical Necessity”, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 1, No. 12, September 2011  
N. Berkes, “Ziya Gökalp: His Contributions to Turkish Nationalism”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Autumn 1954  
D. Boyer & C. Lomnitz, “Intellectuals and Nationalism: Anthropological Engagements”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 34 (2005)  
B. K. Caglar, “Edebiyatçılarımızla Konuşmalar: Yakup Kadri”, *Yücel*, sayı 77, 1935  
S. Cosar, “Women in Turkish Political Thought: Between Tradition and Modernity”, *Feminist Review*, No. 86, 2007  
D. H. Dai, “Transformation of Islamic political identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization”, *Turkish Studies*, Volume 6 2005, Issue 1  
L. B. Dundar, “The Eternal Triangle: Women, Men, and the Nation”, *Journal of Turkish Literature*, Issue 5, 2008  
T. Erdoğan, “Resat Nuri Güntekin'in “Yaprak Dökümü” Adli Romanında Degisimin Sosyo-Kültürel Boyutları”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Konferansları Dergisi*, No: 31 2005  
D. Ergil, “Turkish Reform Movement and Beyond (1923-1938)”, *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Winter 1975  
Z. Gökalp, “Roman”, *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, 142, İstanbul 18 Eylül 1924

Hafizogullari, "Turk Hukuk Devrimi ve Laiklik", *Ataturk Arastirma Merkezi Dergisi*, Sayi 12

D. Herman, "Narrative Theory and the Intentional Stance", *Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, Volume 6, Number 2, June 2008

J. Hutchinson, "Moral Innovators and the Politics of Regeneration: the Distinctive Role of Cultural Nationalists in Nation-building", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, XXX111 (1-2), 1992

N. Irem, "Turkish Conservative Modernism: Birth of a Nationalist Quest for Cultural Renewal", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, February 2002

F. Jameson, "Third World Literature in the era of Multinational Capitalism", *Social Text*, Fall 1986

A. Kadioglu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and Construction of Official Identity", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1996

K. H. Karpat, "Social Themes in Contemporary Turkish Literature Part I", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1960

S. Karaca, "Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Türk Kadın Haklarının Düşünsel Temellerine Katkıları", *Karadeniz Arastirmalari Dergisi*, Guz 2011, Sayi 31

S. Lowrance, "Identity, Grievances, and Political Action: Recent Evidence from the Palestinian Community in Israel", *International Political Science Review*, 27(2), 2006

S. Mardin, "Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, II-3, July 1971

M. T. Ozelli, "The Evolution of the Formal Education System and its Relation to Economic Growth Policies in the Turkish Republic", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, No. 5, 1974

W. Safire, "On Language" *The New York Times Magazine* 5, December 2004

N. Seker, "Vision of Modernity in the Early Turkish Republic: An Overview", *HAOL*, No 14, October 2007

W. H Jr. Sewell, "Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities", *Social Science History*, Vol.16 No.3, Autumn 1992

O. Seyfeddin, "Yeni Lisan", *Genc Kalemler*, cilt 2, sayi 1, 29 Mart 1911.

M. R. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No.5 (Oct., 1994)

Kathleen Wells, *Narrative Inquiry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)

J. B. White, “State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman”, *NWSA Journal*, Volume 15, Number 3, Fall 2003

E. Yilmaz, “Turk Edebiyatında Kadın Öğretmen Tipleri”, *SAÜ Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Sayı 14, Ekim 2007

R. Zeki, “Bizde Hareket-i Nisvan”, *Nevsal-i Milli*, 1332, pp. 343-52.

### **Other Sources**

Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Cep Kılavuzu (İstanbul: TDAK, 1935), s. VII.

<http://www.istanbulkadinmuzesi.org/>

<http://www.turkedebiyati.org/>